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To

THE CHILDREN OF HIS CONGREGATION

AT REIGATE

WHO HAVE LISTENED PATIENTLY

AND, IT IS HOPED, NOT WITHOUT PROFIT

TO THESE ADDRESSES

THEY ARE AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR

PREFATORY LETTER

TO A. D. DERRY, ESQ.

My Dear Derry,—You were a partner in this concern, for without your encouragement and incentive I question whether the task had ever been attempted. You will remember a sunny August day in the Isle of Wight, when during a walk together we examined some armorial bearings on an old gateway, and this led me to speak to you of my thought some day to take famous Mottoes as subjects for children's addresses. You approved of the idea, and urged me to execute it. I began the search for appropriate ones, and devoted some study to the whole subject, and have thereby found a new interest in life, and a helpful and

pleasurable field of research, which will remain with one through life. The best guide known to me is a little book by Mr. C. N. Elvin, entitled, A Handbook of Mottoes, *to which I am indebted for many of the historic touches in the following pages.*

The majority of these addresses, almost as they appear, have already been delivered to the children of my own congregation, and have proved of interest to them. I should like my young friends to possess these permanent recollections of the spoken word, that, haply, they may prove an inspiration in moments when such help is needed; and I shall be glad if they likewise prove of assistance to many who did not hear them. Among that larger number I hope your own boys will not be the least interested readers of these pages. I have tried to set before them the sources of true courage, the claims of Christ, and the glory and beauty of the life in Him.

There is no call for heroism like the call of the Cross—no career so worthy. May you and I, and all that with us have to train sons and daughters for the difficult days that no doubt lie ahead, be so loyal ourselves to the Lord we love, that we may help younger and feebler feet when they falter, as we hold the Unseen Hand with firmer grasp!—Yours ever,

G. Currie Martin.

Easter Eve, 1902.

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MOTTOES, THEIR ORIGIN AND USAGE

I DARESAY we all know in a general way what a motto is, but perhaps we should find it difficult to describe it exactly. "Motto" is really an Italian word, which many of you will recognise more easily in its French form "mot," meaning simply "a word." A motto, then, is a word, but it is a word of a special kind. It is a word which is well known and memorable, a notable or famous utterance. But all famous utterances are not mottoes. A text taken from the Bible, for instance, may or may not be a "motto." We know that there are what are called "motto texts," and these are generally some short, easily remembered sentences, which convey a definite and distinct meaning, and that may be taken as a guide for

life and conduct; such texts, for example, as—

"The Love of Christ constraineth us,"
"The Lord is my Shepherd,"
"Watch and pray."

But, as we shall see, mottoes are often taken from other books than the Bible.

Every nation has its great books to which all its people look up, as to unquestioned authorities, and notable sentences from which are chosen to place upon public buildings, monuments, banners, seals, coins, and other national possessions.

In ancient Greece, we are told how in the temple at Delphi there were certain famous sayings of the wise men to be read within its precincts, the best known of which was that taken by Socrates as his life-motto, "Know thyself." In St. Paul's Cathedral, as most of us are aware, there are to be read the words in Latin which signify, "If you seek a memorial, look round about you," which refer, of course, to Sir Christopher Wren, the architect of the cathedral, and signify that his best monument is his greatest achievement.

I remember, when visiting the Public Library of Cambridge, Mass., being much struck with the founder's motto, which was placed upon a tablet in the entrance hall, and in this case the words were taken from his own private diary, and read as follows:—

"It is noble to be pure,
It is right to be honest,
It is necessary to be temperate,
It is wise to be industrious,
But to know God is best of all."

On many tombstones and monuments the inscriptions partake also of the character of mottoes, as, for instance, the famous one on the grave of Charles Kingsley, indicating the intense affection he had for his wife. The words are "Amavimus, amamus, amabimus," which mean, "We loved, we love, and we shall love"; or that on the tomb of Emerson, in the beautiful cemetery of Concord, which consists of two lines from his own poem—

"The passive Master lent his hand
To the vast soul that o'er him planned."

In one instance known to me, that of the musician Walmisley, in the chapel of Trinity College, Cambridge, the motto, if we may

call it such, consists of a stave of music from his most beautiful anthem, with its appropriate words attached—

"The snare is broken, and we are delivered."

Many times a town has a motto of its own, which appears on the town arms, and all public documents to which its seal is attached. The arms of our own town of Reigate has what is termed a "rebus," that is, a kind of picture riddle upon it, the letters R. E. I. being written over the drawing of a gate, while the old English words underneath—"Never wonne, ne never shall"—imply the heroic temper of the town's-folk, never to give up the tasks they attempt.

Sometimes a town's motto indicates the character of its history, as, for instance, that of the town of Salem, Mass., which reads, "Divitis Indiæ usque ad ultimum sinum," "To the farthest port of the rich East"; which reminds us that once upon a time the town had a great foreign trade, and that from its harbour ships sailed to every quarter of the globe.

Schools, colleges, and universities almost all possess their own mottoes, and their

scholars are proud not only to remember them, but to endeavour to live up to the ideals they indicate. Thus, you see, mottoes are well worth studying, and the attempt to understand them will repay us for any effort we may make to do so; and will enrich not only our stores of knowledge, but the interest with which we shall visit every new place and examine every notable building.

It would appear that one of the earliest uses of mottoes was as religious or patriotic war-cries, whereby the leaders in a battle might encourage and rally their troops. There is one famous instance in the Old Testament, where Gideon encouraged his men to rush on to the attack of the mighty host that opposed them by shouting his cry, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon"; and our own history supplies many similar stories. The old battle-cry, "St. George and Merrie England," was well known, and Shakespere gives us another in Henry IV.—

"Now, Esperance, Percy, and set on."

That of the Duke of Burgundy was "Montjoye, St. Andrew," while "Au Lion" was the cry of the Counts of Flanders, and

"Dieu aide au Premier Chrétien" was that to which the "Montmorencys" rallied.

A further illustration of private war-cries may be taken from the mottoes of two families — the Fenwicks, whose motto is simply the name thrice repeated, "A Fenwick, A Fenwick, A Fenwick!" and the Homes, the use of whose war-cry is given by Sir Walter Scott in one of his poems—

> "Beneath the crest of old Dunbar,
> And Hepburns mingled banners come—
> Down the steep mountain glittering far,
> And shouting still—'A Home! A Home!'"

The well-known "Dieu et mon droit" of our own royal arms is said to have been first used by Richard the Lion, and was, I presume, a war-cry in its first employment. It was dropped, however, from the arms of England until the reign of Edward III., from which time it has held its place.

All party war-cries were forbidden in English warfare after the wars of the Roses. Two only were henceforth permissible, namely, "The King," or "St. George for England."

A motto of Queen Elizabeth's time—in-

deed, her own private motto—consisting of the two Latin words, *Semper eadem*, has been thus immortalised in Macaulay's poem, and his reference shows how it might have been used as a rallying-cry in the hour of battle—

> "Ho! strike the flag-staff deep, Sir Knight.
> Ho! scatter flowers, fair maids!
> Ho, gunners, fire a loud salute!
> Ho, gallants, draw your blades!
> Thou, sun, shine on her joyously!
> Ye breezes, waft her wide!
> Our glorious *Semper Eadem!*—
> The banner of our pride!"

The motto of the city of Aberdeen, "Bon Accord," is said also to have been a rallying-cry in its origin, and that it was used by the citizens in the days of King Robert the Bruce, when they made a raid upon all the English within the city.

Closely connected with their use as war-cries is that of mottoes, as commemorating some brave deed or notable incident. Very many have been given as memorials of acts of bravery or devotion, and they have thus acquired a special value for their recipients. Often we find the motto to consist of a single

name, as, for instance, "Acre," "Algiers," "Deckan," "Caffraria," "Caen," "Cressy," "Calais," which are in each case the names of the places where some famous victory had been gained by those who bear the words for their motto. In other cases a motto has been given as commemorative of the event, but not describing it in exact terms. For instance, Edward III. honoured one of his subjects, who had entertained himself and two brother monarchs most sumptuously, by conferring on him the motto, "Alla corona fidissimo," meaning, "Most faithful friend of the crown." Edward IV., when driven from his throne, assembled the nobles that were loyal to him, and, on coming to Lord Hastings, who, notwithstanding the fact that he had numerous ties of kinship with the king's enemies, Edward felt was one on whom he could absolutely rely, thus addressed him—"I do not ask you anything; I trust you." Hastings reply was—"Sire, trust winneth troth," a noble saying that became the motto of his house.

When William the Lion was on one occasion at a boar hunt he became separ-

ated from his attendants, and one of the wild brutes made a rush at him. He called for help, and a member of the Baird family rushed to his aid. In commemoration of the fact of his rescue the king conferred upon him, with other valuable presents, the motto, "Dominus fecit," "The Lord hath done it."

Mottoes sometimes commemorate notable actions, though they have not been conferred by any royal hand, but may have been chosen either from gratitude or pardonable pride by the heroes or their descendants. Thus the motto, "Deo adjuvante," "With God's help," was given to Sir Edward Pellew for saving the lives of almost all on board the transport *Dutton*, near Plymouth, in the year 1796.

Drake, the great navigator, had for his crest a ship drawn round the globe by a cable held in a hand reached out from heaven, and the motto consisted of the words, "Auxilio divino," "By God's help."

Sir John Ross, one of the explorers of the Arctic regions, had for his motto, "Arctæos numine fines," "I reached the limits of the North by divine guidance."

Another family has for its motto the words in French, "Advance and shoot well," because one of its ancestors in a battle against the Turks rallied his archers with these words.

A large and curious class of mottoes is that which consists of a reference, oftentimes a pun, to the name of the bearer. Let me give you a few of the more remarkable and most easily recognised instances.

The family Bonner have for their motto the French words, "A la bonne heure," "In good time." The Vernons find their name split up into two Latin words, "*Ver non* semper viret," which means, "Spring does not last always," but if read as one word signifies, "The Vernons always flourish."

Neville, the architect of the famous court of Trinity College, Cambridge, had one of these punning mottoes, which he may be said to have taken as his inspiration for his great work. The words are, "Ne vile velis," which means, "Wish nothing base."

The motto of the Onslow family is simply that name turned into Latin, in the well-known form which it assumed as the motto

of Gustavus Adolphus, namely, "Festina lente," that is, "Hasten slowly," *On slow.*

The Bevans have for their motto the words, "Be in the van"; the Doyles, "Do no ill"; the Trowers, "I trow aright"; and the Freres, "Frère aime frère," "Brother loves brother."

The motto, however, sometimes refers not to the name, but to the coat of arms; for example, the Hyndmans have a sundial for their crest, and the words "True as the dial to the sun" for their motto. A family with a castle for a crest has "Virtue my castle" as its motto, while a Scottish family, whose crest is a sleeping dog, has the words "Dinna wauken sleepin' dogs" for a motto. Such examples might be very greatly increased, but perhaps these will encourage you to discover others for yourselves, now that I have put you on the right track.

The great majority of mottoes have no reference either to the wearer's name or his crest, but consist simply of some worthy sentiment or noble aspiration that may either be a quotation from literature or a short and pithy statement of a truth. There

is one great lesson, it appears to me, to be learned from the heraldic law regarding the use of mottoes. It is said that while no great family may change its coat of arms that has descended from generation to generation, it is permissible for any man to adopt a new motto if he cares to do so. It is only, I believe, in comparatively recent times that mottoes have been looked upon as part of the coat of arms at all.

This custom suggests to us that while there is much in our life that is beyond our control,—for example, the social position into which we are born, our physical constitution, and other results of heredity and environment,—it is yet possible for every one of us to mould our lives for ourselves, and to overcome whatever disadvantages and hindrances we may have inherited, to make, as it were, our own motto, and write it afresh on the old coat of arms.

God means that we should each make our life the best that it can be, and He will not take for an excuse any cowardly shelter under the plea of the evil we have inherited, or the limited opportunities we enjoy. In

this battle there must be no shirking. The war-cry is a noble and a rousing one, and it is the part of a coward to falter. All great leaders take the van themselves in the hour of danger, and our Leader is never wanting. Let us follow Him with brave and trustful hearts! He is beckoning us to advance.

"Shame on us, Christian brethren,
His name and sign who bear,
Oh shame, thrice shame upon us
To keep Him standing there."

A CAREFUL START

"Principiis obsta."

"Abhor that which is evil."—ROM. xii. 9.

MANY of you doubtless remember the story of Gulliver in Lilliput. You have not forgotten how he fell asleep by the seashore, and when he woke found that the little people had climbed all over him, and twisted round his body strands of tiny ropes, not thicker than hairs, but so numerous were they, and so skilfully placed, as to hold him prisoner. It would have been quite easy, had he been conscious of their work at the beginning, to break one or even a hundred of their little ropes, but when there were a thousand to tackle it became impossible. Now, that forms a capital illustration of the truth that to-day's motto teaches, namely, "Resist beginnings." It is far easier to stop dangerous or wrong actions before they

have hardened into habits than after we have permitted them to take such a firm hold of our life that it needs a great wrench to separate ourselves from them. Indeed, sometimes, however anxious we may be to get rid of the results of some evil or foolish habit, it is impossible to do so. I have a constant reminder of a trick of my boyhood in the twisted finger of my right hand. I used to sit with it for hours in a certain cramped position, simply for the fun of the thing, and now when I fain would have it straight I cannot; it remains, not only the result, but the reminder of my folly.

Some of you may remember the story that Virgil tells us about the priest of Troy and his two sons. You may even have seen the great group of statuary that represents the incident. The story goes, that while they were standing by the seashore two great serpents came gliding over the surface of the deep, and laid hold, first, of one of the lads. The father went to his rescue, and it seemed an easy task to untwist the coils of the snake; but presently it wound itself more firmly about their limbs, and before long the three

became knotted in a hopeless entanglement of the serpents' coils, and after a terrible struggle were slain together by their cruel tormentors.

That old world story is just a picture of what may happen to every one of us if we allow sin to lay hold of our life. Tennyson has called us "the fools of habit," and, indeed, it is often surprising how foolish people can be about admitting bad habits into their life: they see the evil effects that these things have wrought on the lives of other people, but they never seem to imagine that the same sad consequences will take place in themselves. We cannot be too careful about the kind of guest we admit into the inner chambers of our heart. It would be easy enough were all these things ugly and hateful at first sight; but often the most dangerous are the most attractive. Perhaps you have seen in the hedgerows in summer a pretty wild plant with lovely clusters of berries, red like coral; it is called the Barberry, and at the back of its leaves you may sometimes find a number of pretty little round yellow cups. In these

cups there is a kind of powder, which the wind scatters over the fields, and should it come in contact with the growing wheat it will change the beautiful ears of grain into black, ugly, useless, hurtful ones. There are many subtle and in themselves seemingly beautiful dangers that surround the harvest fields of our life. The wind of temptation and the soft blowing breezes of the world carry the poison with them, and if we are not very careful the evil may be wrought in our own lives before we are conscious of it.

On the other hand, things often look much more terrible before we tackle them than they are when we boldly face them. Oftentimes there is nothing so dangerous as to dally with an evil, and approach it in a half-shrinking manner. The old adage applies in many circumstances—

> "If you gently touch a nettle
> It will sting you for your pains.
> Grasp it like a man of mettle,
> And it soft as silk remains."

Tennyson tells a story in his tales of Arthur's Court of how four brothers held a certain castle. Three of them stationed

themselves in the passes that led to it, and challenged all comers. At last one of the knights overcame the three and reached the castle walls, where he had to face his last encounter. When his echoing challenge, thrice repeated, sank into silence there issued from a black pavilion, mounted on a night-black steed, a huge and gruesome figure of Death, who advanced in grim silence, not uttering a sound. Terror struck into every heart, and even the bravest felt an icy chill of strange dread. But in the onslaught Death was "cast to ground," and when the conqueror clove his helmet there "issued the bright face of a blooming boy." He had been compelled to play the strange rôle by his brethren, who were confident his life would never be risked, and that the supernatural horror would protect him. Many evils are like that grim figure. They seem very dreadful at first, but when one deals with them bravely, and faces the foe with prompt courage, the reality is found to be much less awful than our imagination had pictured.

We know how terrible it seemed at first

to go away from home, how we felt that we had rather do anything than face such a trial. To some of us it may appear impossible even now. But one or two days of school-life convinced us not only that it was endurable, but that it was "jolly." The beginning was the hardest part of that trial.

We must be careful also about the beginnings we make. Everything depends on them. "A task well begun is half done" the proverb says, and the reason is that a good method of starting secures our carrying on the work more easily. To learn the art of music under a good teacher from the commencement will save much trouble and loss of time. Bad methods would make it necessary to unlearn much, as well as compel us to begin afresh and cover much old ground again. The formation of all habits is of the same nature. Let us start with good ones, and we are half-way to the building up of fine characters. Let us grow a crop of bad ones, and the garden of our soul must first be weeded before we can hope for a show of fair flowers.

Let us be careful what we begin, how we begin, and where we begin, but let us all resolve to make one beginning, if we have not already made it, and that is to begin to serve God. There can be no question about that. It is our highest wisdom and our greatest safety to enter on that course at once. The surest way of preventing evil influences from encroaching on our life is to have it filled with good ones. The doctors tell us that we fall a prey to many diseases, the germs of which are in the air we breathe or the water we drink, whenever we are not in a sufficiently strong condition to resist these little enemies. They try, therefore, to keep our bodies in the best condition by plenty of fresh air, good food, and proper exercise, for then we are most likely to escape the danger. So we should use all the means we have of strengthening our soul's life by Bible-reading, prayer, the services of our Church, the love of good books, the choice of good companions, by which means the best within us is maintained and nourished. Above all, we should live as close as we can to Jesus Christ. Be much

with Him. Talk often to Him. Love Him best. Try to do His will, and there will be no opportunity for His enemies to gain a foothold, or for the weakening powers of sin to get hold of our hearts and lay them waste.

THE HAPPY LIFE

"Dum vivimus vivamus."

"To me to live is Christ."—PHIL. i. 21.

THESE latter words are not a translation of the Latin motto. Indeed, the spirit of the Latin motto is quite the opposite of that of the words of Paul. It means something much more akin to the thought of the words, "a short life and a merry one," but it was the family motto of a man who changed its whole temper when he accepted it as his own. Philip Doddridge was born in the beginning of the eighteenth century, in the house of a London tradesman. He was so slight a little baby that he had been laid aside in the very moment of his birth as dead, when someone noticed in the tiny, fragile frame a feeble movement, and nurtured the faint spark of life into a flame. That was the first of the great providences

that marked his life, and which he never failed thankfully to record. He had the blood of heroes in his veins, and it was a grand thing for the world that his life was spared. One of his grandfathers had been a clergyman in the Church of England in those terrible days of 1662, when the king issued orders that all the ministers who refused to stifle their consciences should be driven out of their homes and deprived of their livelihood. This brave man had a wife and ten children, but he dared not disobey God, and, with a heavy heart, and not knowing whither he went, he left his dear old home to follow Christ. His mother's father had known as hard a persecution. A native of Prague, in Austria, and a loyal Christian, he found it dangerous to remain where his fellow-believers were being imprisoned and put to death. He set out on foot to leave his own land, that he might seek one where he should be free to worship God as he wished, and put all his stock of money in a leather belt. The first night of his journey he left the belt behind him in the little inn where he

slept, and did not miss it till the next night, when he was going to bed. In the early morning he turned back again, and made his way to his first sleeping-place. There he asked the maid if she had noticed his belt, which he valued very much. She told him it had been thrown away with some rubbish, but found it for him. You may fancy how glad he was, and how gaily he sang, as for the second time he set out on his journey, praising God for His goodness.

These were the stories little Philip used to hear from his mother's lips in the winter evenings, as they sat with his sisters round the fire. In the light of the dancing flames they could see the queer, quaint figures of the white and blue Dutch tiles that ornamented the fireplace. On these tiles were pictures of Bible stories, and the little boy was never tired of hearing his mother tell about Abraham, Moses, David, and Samuel, or about Jesus as He bid Peter walk on the waves, or gathered the children to Him, or suffered on the cruel cross. These stories, so tenderly told, he never forgot, and all his life he loved to tell them to others.

He was only a little lad when both father and mother died, and strangers took him into their home. But he was very happy, for he was a bright little boy, kind, gentle, thoughtful for others, and always fond of lessons and his books.

Thus he grew up in the pretty old city of St. Albans, under the care of a good minister, named Dr. Clark. Soon his own great trial of courage came. A great lady — the Duchess of Bedford — heard about him, and his studious ways, and offered to send him to the university at her own expense, and one day present him to a living. It was not in vain, however, that he had listened to the story of his grandfather. He knew enough to understand that this meant giving up the principles of the free religion for which his friends had suffered, that had been dear to his father and mother, and that he was learning to love for himself. He saw very well how much he was giving up, but did not hesitate, and made his choice, though gratefully thanking his kind patron.

He wished to study for the ministry, for

even in his boyhood he used to visit poor people in their homes, read the Bible to them, and tell them all he knew about it. Reading was not so common an accomplishment as now, and many of these people depended entirely on such kind help to know anything of the Bible. It seemed as if there was no chance of his securing his desire, however, and he had almost accepted the offer of a friend to train him for a lawyer. One morning he was speaking to God very earnestly about the whole matter, and asking Him to show him what was right, when, during his prayer, a knock was heard at the door. He went, and received a letter from his old friend, Dr. Clark, in which he offered to train him in his own home. As joyfully as his grandfather had once done, he set out on his journey, and began his college course. He was a diligent and eager student, grudging every hour that was not spent on his books, or in direct preparation for his work. At the early age of twenty he became a minister in the little village of Kibworth, in Leicestershire, and his people soon learned

to love him. It was not long before offers reached him to go to larger and more important churches, but he preferred the quiet village, where he might be among his books, and fit himself more thoroughly for the great task God had set him. Before many years were over he became a teacher of students himself, and during all the rest of his life was a tutor, as well as a preacher and pastor. He used to begin his lectures at six in the morning, and work very hard all day, having someone to read to him while he dressed, and never idle even as he waited for meals, or travelled from one place to another. When he had been eight years at Kibworth he received a call to Northampton, and only after long consideration accepted it. What led him to decide was the unconscious voice of a little child, and the urgent pleading of the young men and women. One day, as he was passing through the house of one of his friends, he heard a little child reading at his mother's knee, and the only words that reached his ear were these, "and as thy days, so shall thy strength be," which he took as a

message from God to quiet his anxiety. So eager were the young people to secure him that their entreaties prevailed.

He was not only a great preacher, but a good man. One day he overheard a little girl playfully talking to his little dog. "Who made you?" she asked; "what, you Dr. Doddridge's dog, and don't know who made you!" On telling this to his students, he added, "If so much is expected of my dog, what must be expected of my students?" But all who lived in his house felt that his own life was the greatest of all his sermons.

When he was only forty-eight years of age he caught a cold, that brought on a severe illness, for recovery from which only one chance remained — the seeking of a warmer climate. He was ordered to Lisbon, but the night before he sailed from Falmouth he became so much worse that he was advised to remain. "No," was his reply, "the die is cast, and I choose to go." Cheerfully he faced death, and it came to him very soon in that strange land.

He wrote a great many books, which are not much read now, because their language

and methods of treatment are not such as to appeal to most of us, but he wrote also, for use in his own church, some lovely hymns that will never be forgotten. When we sing, "O God of Bethel, by whose hand," "My God, and is Thy table spread," "Lord of the Sabbath, hear our vows," and others from his pen, let us think of the brave, loving, generous, courteous Christian gentleman who wrote them, and ask God to make us as faithful to our work, our principles, and our Lord as he was! We might all learn, remember, and adopt as our own life-motto the lines he wrote, interpreting his Latin family legend—

"'Live while you live,' the epicure would say,
'And seize the pleasures of the present day.'
'Live while you live,' the sacred preacher cries,
'And give to God each moment as it flies.'
Lord, in my view let both united be;
I live in pleasure, when I live to Thee."

SWIMMING AGAINST THE STREAM

"Contranando incrementum."

"Be not conformed to this world."—ROM. xii. 2.

THERE is a certain town in the south of Scotland in which when a boy I used often to spend my holidays. The town arms consist of a shield on which are figured three salmon, one swimming in one direction, and two the opposite way. We used to see this shield on the old bridge and other buildings of the town, and one had only to look over the parapet of the bridge to see the meaning of it in the noble river that flowed beneath.

I watched the fish, trout and salmon, some of them making headway against the current and others drifting down easily with the stream. It was possible to imagine one of the young salmon saying to itself, "What is the use of all this hard work, what good

can come to me by striving so hard to go up stream, when it is so easy to turn tail and swim down?" And no doubt those in a former day who fixed the town arms and its motto had learned their lesson through their own river. The secret was not to be learned in a minute, one had to come to where the salmon-leaps were, and watch the strong, healthy, active fish fighting their way against the rapid stream, and leaping from pool to pool, to understand how it was that prosperity came to them by swimming against the stream. To give in at the first difficulty was not only to miss all the pleasure and the excitement, but to lose the prizes of life in the salmon world, and to be reckoned among the weak and inefficient; but inasmuch as swimming with the stream was so much more easy, I fancy here, as in the great world of men, a far larger number chose the easier course. It seems to me that the fish and the old town motto can teach us a valuable lesson. These brave words are not the motto of the majority of people; you will often be told that you must move with the times, you must do as other

people do, and not set yourself up against the general opinion. When you go to school, for example, there may be habits and customs that pass for school morality, which you know quite well are not right in themselves, and yet you will be called a "prig," and even harder names, if you resist them, or try to introduce practices that you know to be honest and right, but which run counter to well established habits.

Perhaps you remember the scene in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, when Arthur suggested giving up the time-honoured method of using "cribs," and how absurd it seemed to press dictates of honesty in such a connection, how many arguments were at once forthcoming for sticking to the old ways, because they were easier, and how it needed a very firm adherence to principles and a hard fight to gain the battle.

All true heroism has for its hall-mark the habit of swimming against the stream; men like Luther, Knox, and Cromwell became great because they were courageous enough to stand up against all the prevailing ideas

and long-established customs of their day, and obey the commands of their conscience. The world will always have a larger number to follow its ways; two salmon will always swim down for every one that swims up.

When Christian was climbing the Hill Difficulty, he met two men running their hardest in the opposite direction, the name of the one was Timorous, and of the other Mistrust, to whom Christian said: "Sirs, what's the matter, you run the wrong way?" Timorous answered that they were going to the city of Zion, and how they got by that difficult place, but said: "The farther we go, the more danger we meet with, wherefore we turned and are going back again." Christian's answer was the true and brave one: "I must venture," he said; "to go back is nothing but death, I will yet go forward."

To swim with the stream is not only more easy, but it seems at first to be a more rapid way of progress; it is only in the long-run that one finds out how much ground has been lost that there is no regaining.

The greatest of all examples for us in this matter, as in every other, is our Lord Jesus Christ, who was markedly a stranger to the ways and habits of the world about Him, because He was not of the world, therefore the world hated Him, as He said it must, and He told His followers that the same treatment would be meted out to them. Jesus was often tempted to go the world's way, not only by the devil in the wilderness when he showed Him all the glory of the world, and offered to make it His on condition that Jesus would acknowledge him as His lord, but also when the people strove to make Him king by force, and when His disciples would have hindered Him from going up to Jerusalem to suffer.

Paul bids us in the text I have chosen not "be conformed to this world," and John tells us that we are to love neither "the world nor the things that are in the world, for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." We see therefore that the kind of life I have been describing is the highest and best which it is possible to

live, and that most in accordance with the mind of Christ and His disciples. The text reminds us of the name by which we Free Church people have become known in history. We are Nonconformists, not, I am afraid, because we never conformed to the ways of the world, but because at one great moment of history we refused to conform to the laws of the State when they interfered with the spiritual liberty of the Church; and though I should like you always to be staunch Nonconformists in that sense, I am still more anxious that you should be nonconformists in Paul's sense, and never yield obedience to the commandments of the world and its prince. But no negative word can ever be the highest on any subject. It is better to be conformist than nonconformist. To what then are we to conform? To what are we to be like?

This also Paul tells us; we are to be like citizens of the heavenly city, and to conform to its laws. It is because we have higher laws to obey that we refuse obedience to lower ones when they conflict with the higher, and let us not forget

that obedience to those higher laws alone secure prosperity and peace. "For the world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

OUR TRUEST RICHES

"Use time wisely."

"Redeeming the time."—EPH. v. 16.

THE words of this motto stand high up in a tower above one of the busiest streets of a great northern city. Underneath them is the dial of an uncommon clock. There are two circles alongside one another. In the first of these, in clear figures, is displayed the hour. In the other are the figures that denote each minute. And as one watches it, the one, two, three, four, etc., succeed each other in regular succession. The first time I saw it, the thought occurred to my mind very forcibly, how long a minute is. I was surprised to find how far I could walk along the street between the appearance of one of these figures and the next. It was a very noteworthy manner of impressing on one's mind how frequently we waste our

time. Perhaps you have all been impressed with it on certain occasions. You may have stood with a watch in your hand trying to time a race, or to see how long elapsed between a flash of lightning and the subsequent peal of thunder. It may have seemed to you then as if even seconds were long, and when we read in certain sciences about seconds being divided up into millionth parts, our brain becomes dizzy at the thought of the enormous length of time. But the more common idea is of time's shortness. I suppose this becomes more and more noticeable the older we get. When we are quite little the hours seem long, and a summer day is like a week. But even children, when they are happy, think that time flies too quickly. There is one phrase people use sometimes which always appears to me one of the worst and, if they really meant it, most sinful phrases one could use. They speak about "killing time" as if time were some enemy, some evil beast that had to be slain, and these are generally the people who have least to do, and who make the worst possible use of the time at their dis-

posal. As a matter of fact, time is one of God's most precious gifts, and, like His other gifts of highest value, it is common to every one. Time is the same everywhere, and we have all the same length of day, hour, and minute; wherever there may be inequality, there is perfect fairness and adequate opportunity here, and it altogether depends upon the way in which we use our time as to how we are going to manage our life. Time is far too sacred a gift to abuse it. I daresay you have often heard people say, "Time is money," but have you ever thought what they mean by it? Some one, for instance, has been kept waiting half an hour by an unpunctual friend. To the latter it may not have seemed a matter of importance whether he was there in time or not, but to the former that half-hour may have meant the missing of an appointment, whereby he might have been entrusted with some important business that would have brought him a large sum of money. Or again, a physician who has been summoned down into the country to attend some serious

case of illness charges a large fee for his services. People may think it is very hard that he should do so, but during the ten or twelve hours occupied in the journey he may have missed scores of consultations that might have brought him in a far larger sum. It is this kind of idea that is in Paul's mind when he uses the words of the text. Ephesus was a great mercantile city, and into this mart poured all the produce of the East and West. Sometimes bales of rich silk or other special fabrics might come on board the ships into the harbour. These would be displayed, and only the merchants who could make up their minds speedily would secure the rich prices, and be enabled to reap the subsequent profit. Those who dallied with the chance, and delayed their purchase from day to day, would find that when at last they decided to buy, either that the goods were gone, or that those that were left were not worth purchasing. "You have seen these men," Paul says, "and you understand how success and failure attend them. Let it be the same with you in regard to the time. Buy up

every possible opportunity, and let none escape."

I know one great castle in the south of England, and on its entrance tower there are two sundials. The one that faces the approach has upon it the one Latin word, "Prætereunt," meaning, "They have passed by," and refers to the hours that the dial has measured. Then, as one comes up to the flight of stairs that lead to the hall, the other dial upon the right hand bears the word "Imputantur," "They are reckoned up," thus reminding every one who enters that the hours one has lived have their chronicle with God. It is a solemn lesson to be taught so forcibly, and impresses at any rate the casual visitor. One wonders whether it becomes so familiar to those who live within the roof of the castle that they do not even notice the words as they go out and in at the door. It is possible to become so familiar with danger that men forget it altogether, and we may become so familiar with truths like this that they do not impress us. I daresay we have all done our best to save our money, in order to get something

we desired very much. How many times we have counted it, how often we tried to discover by the very process of counting that we had a shilling more than the sum we knew very well was the correct one. Yet time is of infinitely more value than all the money we can ever get. Some men are so rich that we read about their being worth so many pounds a minute; but in reality every one's minutes are worth far more than can be reckoned in the terms of earthly currency. In reality our time is not ours at all, but God's. He gives it to us, and it is a trust we hold for Him. You remember the kind of stories Jesus used to tell about the rich men who left their property in the hands of their servants while they went away on a long journey. On their return they were wont to demand an account of the stewardship, and if the reckoning was not satisfactory the careless ones were punished. There is no talent more precious, as there is none more universal, than this talent of time. If it is true that in order to take care of our money and be able to use it well, we must begin to learn its value, and be trusted

with a certain amount of it when we are children, it is even more true of time. I wish you boys and girls to think seriously, act wisely, and pray earnestly about this great and wonderful gift of God.

GRATITUDE

"Non immemor beneficii."

"Forget not all his benefits."—Ps. ciii. 2.

This motto belongs to a family in Ireland which has as its "coat of arms" a baboon carrying a baby. This strange figure has a story connected with it. It is said that long ago one of the family was away at the war, and had left his household in the charge of one or two old retainers and the women servants. Suddenly there came an alarm of the enemy, and everybody fled, forgetful of the little baby, the heir of the house; but a baboon, who was the pet of the family, noticed the omission, ran to the cradle, caught up the child, and carried him to the top of the abbey steeple, holding him out for the people to see. Great was the terror of the forgetful servants, but, happily, the animal carried the child safely to the ground

again. When FitzGerald, the child's father, returned, he was grateful to the dumb animal that had saved the fortunes of his house; and was not ashamed to set the monkey in the centre of his shield of honour, and underneath to place the motto, "Not unmindful of his kindness." You notice how nearly these words correspond to the familiar ones of the 103rd Psalm. We are taught that we must not be forgetful of God's goodness, and that the best way to remind ourselves of it is to hold a clear recollection of the means whereby God helped us.

There are some quaint customs in England that show how different generations hold in affectionate remembrance the usages of an earlier time, because these remind them of the kindness of their benefactors. At Winchester School, for instance, the boys always prefer to use the simple, square platters of wood to plates of a finer and more expensive kind, because these have been handed down from generation to generation, and were the only form of dish used at the time the college was founded.

The boys thus feel themselves in closer touch with the spirit and times of their founder. At Queen's College, Oxford, too, there are numerous quaint customs to keep the scholars in mind of those who in the old days founded that seat of learning, and gave their money to support all who should study within its walls.

One of the famous standards of the world was that of Constantine the Great. It was in the form of a cross, and it is said that on the eve of one of his great battles the emperor saw this sign in heaven, with the words written over it, "In this conquer," and made a vow that if heaven granted him on that day the victory, he would always fight under the banner of the cross and subject himself to its sovereignty.

Thus, you see, men glory in things quaint, or old, or even despised, if thereby they have been aided; and are glad to take them for the token of honour and glory. They are not ashamed of them, because for those who wear or display them they have a sacred and joyful meaning. Now, we should learn a lesson from such customs, that not

only is ingratitude disgraceful, but must bring with it its own punishment.

I have read somewhere a fairy story that tells how once a traveller was wandering through a wood, when he came upon a clump of the little blue flowers that we call forget-me-nots. He bent over them surprised and delighted at their beauty, but wondered more when the little flowers began to speak to him. They told him that if he plucked a handful of them, and carried them on through the forest, they would disclose to him untold treasure. He eagerly snatched some of the blossoms and went hurriedly on his way. Presently he came to a rocky defile, and there right in front of him opened a doorway that led him to a cave filled with all manner of gold and precious stones. When he saw the wonderful treasure that was within his reach he rushed eagerly forward and threw away the now despised and seemingly worthless flowers, but in a moment the doorway closed before his eyes and he had no spell wherewith to reopen it. Thus was he taught the sin of ingratitude and the shame of selfishness. Now, God's good

gifts are like the little flowers in the forest, strewn plentifully at our feet, and if we take them with loving hands and humble hearts, remembering the Good Giver, they will open to us ever new treasure-houses, and we shall become the richer in love, in friendship, and in what is best of all, the power to help.

I have told you how people have kept in mind the great mercies of their life, by having ever before their eyes some memorial of the special event they wished to remember, and we also have such a gracious provision. Paul is always reminding people about one great and mighty name whereby to keep their hearts full of thankfulness,—"Remember," he says to Timothy, "Jesus Christ." Those of you that have read the *Pilgrim's Progress* will not have forgotten that when Christian came to the Palace Beautiful he was asked what were the means whereby he was made glad in the midst of difficulties, and he replied: "When I think what I saw at the cross, that will do it; and when I look on my broidered coat, that will do it; also, when I look into the roll that I carry in my bosom, that will

do it, and when my thoughts wax warm about whither I am going, that will do it." And our Lord Jesus, who knew quite well what short memories we have, and how much we need aids to strengthen them, has been good enough to leave us one clear and beautiful memorial whereby we may be always reminded of His tender love. Just before He died He had a meal with His disciples, and as He passed the bread and wine-cup from hand to hand He said to each one of them, "This do in remembrance of Me." I think we all know how dearly we cherish the keepsakes our absent friends have given us, and this service that we call the "Lord's Supper," or the "Communion," is nothing else than the keepsake of our Lord Jesus. There are many people who are like some of the children I know that are always ready enough to say "Please," but have to be often told to say "Thanks." We are ready to ask God for all kinds of good gifts, but when we get them we forget to thank Him. Our thanks should not only be the utterance of our lips, but the very

spirit of our lives; we should be always seeking to discover how we may serve God best and please Jesus most, living lives like His of gentle service, kind deeds, and trustful love.

THE KINDLY LIGHT

"Lux mea Christus."

"I am the light of the world."—JOHN viii. 12.

THE words of this motto speak to us of three things. First, they tell us of light; secondly, of Him who is the light; and third, of our own need of light, each one for himself and herself.

1. *Light.*—There is nothing we know so well, nothing, perhaps, we understand so little. The men of science tell us very wonderful facts about light: they tell us how fast it travels—so fast that our bicycles, motor-cars, express trains, even our electric telegraph, cannot compare with its tremendous speed. They can tell us much about the strange wave-like motion by which it is scattered, and how the longer and shorter waves produce the lovely colours with which we are familiar in the rainbow, or which are

perfectly revealed in the spectrum. But of light, in its own nature, we do not actually know a great deal, and that most of us must take on faith, if we know anything at all about it. Yet everybody knows what light can do. We are aware that we pass through the most lovely country on a pitch dark night, and never discover its beauty. Mountains, rivers, lakes, trees may be all around us, but we cannot see them. Let the morning dawn, however, and the sun rise, then let us go forth and look down that valley, and every detail of its loveliness stands out clearly. The blue sky overhead, with the fleecy clouds, the varied tints of the lichen-covered rocks, the dark-brown stream specked with white foam, the rich purple of the heather-clad hills, all is visible. What has wrought the change? Light. They were all there before. The light has not created them, but it has made it possible for us to know about them and enjoy them. Not only "beauty," but "safety," the light brings us. We dare not walk along cliff-paths or climb precipitous mountains in the darkness, lest we slip and lose our lives, but

if we have nerve and skill sufficient these paths become quite possible in the daylight. Health, too, comes from the light. The old Greeks looked on the Sun-God as the healer, and modern medicine teaches the same faith. Disease flourishes in darkness. Men grow well if they bathe in sunshine. People have often to change their rooms, their houses, even their country, that they may live where the sun shines brightly and often, where for longer hours each day, and for more days each year, his warm radiance may cheer them. But the Bible speaks of another kind of Light—the light of the soul, of the mind, of the heart. These, too, may live unhealthy, unlovely, unsafe lives in the darkness. "Light," says the Hebrew poet, "arises for the upright in heart." He did not mean that the sun shone on the actual pathway trodden by the feet of some people, and not on that trodden by others. He did mean, however, that when people were in difficulty and trouble, if they trusted God they would find the difficulties vanish as the mists often flee away before the sun. You know how our

beautiful missionary hymn asks us Christian children a question—

> "Can we whose souls are lighted
> With wisdom from on high,
> Can we to men benighted
> The lamp of life deny?"

It is clear therefore that many lives are in far worse darkness than that of night, even the darkness of sin and ignorance, and that there is a light that may shine upon them. We have next to discover the nature of this light.

2. Our motto tells us it is *Christ*.—There is a beautiful picture in one of the libraries in America, which contains a group of all the great prophets of the Old Testament times. At one end of the painting are two men — Malachi and Zechariah, with their faces earnestly turned forward, their hands outstretched, their fingers pointing to some object that attracts them, and a tender clear light shines on them, the source of which we cannot see. If you turn to their books you will understand the artist's meaning. They looked eagerly for Christ, and spoke of His coming very soon after their own day.

They were like men who stand on the top of some high mountain a little while before sunrise. Behind them the shadows are rapidly being driven lower and lower down the slopes, or are lurking only in the valleys. They are all silent, eager, expectant. Some have their hands outstretched toward the East, as they catch the first glimpse of the sun's disk above the horizon. These prophets knew the world was soon to be flooded with light, when Christ should show men how good and loving God is, and when He came Jesus Christ took this name for His own. "I am the light of the world," he told the people. The poets of Rome and the wisest men of Greece were looking as eagerly as were the Hebrew prophets for such a sunrise. People were finding everywhere that they were dwelling in darkness, or at best in the half-lights of a hazy dawn. They needed and they longed for the happy, joyous Sun. Jesus brings that light. Men were very full of sorrow when their friends died, or at the thought of their own summons to another world. Jesus bade them look on Him as the Resurrection and the

Life, and to believe that when a man loved Him he would never really die. Men had tried all sorts of terrible ways to rid themselves of sin and to win God's favour. Jesus told them God loved them all, and would forgive their sins, if they only turned away from them and sought His pardon. There was no use in any other sacrifice, for Jesus Himself was the perfect sacrifice. Men said they could not find God anywhere, nor understand Him. Jesus said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," God was loving, kind, tender, gracious, good as He was. The little children knew and loved Jesus. He played with them, kissed them, took them in His arms, told them beautiful stories. If God is like this friend of theirs, then they can love God. Yes, Jesus said, God is our Father, and we may be sure we can never think Him better or more loving than He is, for He is much more good than we can ever think. Thus Jesus filled the world with a lovely, pure, gracious light, and sought to dispel the darkness and gloom everywhere, but some clouds were too thick to penetrate, from some

valleys the mists would not rise. Thus we are brought to think of the last thing our motto speaks about, namely—

3. *Christ my light.*—You have been in a great house lit by electricity. The wires are properly laid into every apartment; the lamps are there, the little knobs to switch it off and on. You have passed from a brilliantly illuminated hall into a room, and shut the door behind you. It is quite dark. What is wrong? Has the electricity no power here? In this room, the one place in all that house, it refuses to make light? Has this part of the house no connection with all the rest? Oh yes, you have only one little thing to do, push down that little brass button by the side of the door, and the room in a single moment is ablaze with light. Sometimes I am in a company of people in a private house, in a church, or out in the country. We are all speaking about Jesus, and His goodness, beauty, and power. I see many faces glowing with joy responsive to the things said of one they love—but I notice one face in which there is no such light, only the mark of weariness

or annoyance. I ask myself why? Jesus Christ has power. Jesus Christ is equally near us all. Jesus Christ is eager to make all our lives happy and full of light; but that man or woman, may be boy or girl, has not believed it. The work of faith has not connected that life with Christ. We may say, "Christ is the light of the world," and be none the happier. But when we say, "Christ is my light," then everything becomes different. The change is as great as was that in the dark room when the little button was touched and the electric light flooded it.

The wise and good Erskine of Linlathen once wrote to a friend, "Happy the heart that has learned to say *my* God! All religion is contained in that short expression, and all the blessedness that man or angel is capable of. All religion is in the change from He to Thou. Only with the Thou we know God." All we need do to have the light of Christ in our own life is quite as simple —we have but to ask Him with the desire to have Him answer us, and the belief that He certainly will fill our lives with the light of His holy love. Shall we not

all make the words we so often sing our request?—

"Jesus, great Redeemer!
Source of life Divine!
In our souls for ever
Grant the light to shine!

Make us pure, we pray Thee,
Thou who art so pure!
And O let thy likeness
In our hearts endure!"

By a somewhat singular coincidence this motto is that of the Newman family, and one member of it has made a famous use of its idea in one of the best known of modern hymns. When the late Cardinal was quite a young man he was travelling in Southern Europe. He had been unwell, and was also in great perplexity about his future course of conduct. He was on board ship, off the coast of Sicily, when he penned the lines that have become so popular, and which we sing so frequently—

"Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet: I do not ask to see
The distant scene—one step enough for me."

THE FOES OF SHAME

"Loyauté n'a honte."

"Every one therefore who shall confess Me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven."—MATT. x. 32.

THERE is a great charm about the very sound of the word loyalty. Have you never found yourself walking rather lazily and wearily along the street, when suddenly the strains of a military band playing a stirring march have fallen on your ears. At once you changed your gait, your carriage became more erect, and your feet moved at once more quickly and without conscious effort. The music had brought with it new life. Just so; there are words, I think, that come to us like clarion calls or martial music, with a thrill of power and a pulse of strength. Surely loyalty is one of these. It is a soldier's virtue, but we have all to be

soldiers. It speaks of subtle dangers to desert, to be slack, to relapse into indifference to our Captain's commands, to be subject to many inducements to unfaithfulness to our Leader's standard. Dangers lurk behind the word, for it is shadowed by a dark companion—disloyalty. Shame dogs the footsteps of the latter, but the loyal heart is a stranger to shame—his hideous form can never enter there. Loyalty does not speak to us of what we do, but of what we are. It is not certain that the loyal soldier on the field of battle will always obtain mention in his general's despatches, or be decorated with the Victoria Cross. He is not proof against wounds, defeat, or death. Indeed, he is more likely to meet with these than is his disloyal comrade. Loyalty is a temper of the heart—an attitude of the soul. The loyal boy or girl will be always loyal, no matter where placed or what the work on hand may be—and the highest type of loyalty is loyalty to Christ. That is the source and fountain of every other form of the virtue. Loyal to Him, "we cannot then be false to any man."

There is a beautiful story about one of the Kings of France, Louis IX.[1] You will read about him one day, if you are not already acquainted with some of his brave deeds. You may see the beautiful church which he built in Paris,—the Sainte Chapelle, which is like no other building of its kind I have ever seen,—so richly decorated, yet so solemn and holy. When he was a very young man he was married to Princess Margaret of Provençe. On the wedding ring that he wore from that day he caused three words to be engraved, "God, France, Margaret," and he used to say to his friends, "I have no love outside this ring." That was the secret of his being known to history as Saint Louis. To be a saint never means to be a milksop. It means to be the truest, best man or woman, boy or girl, that it is possible for any of us to become; and when Louis came to die, and a great preacher spoke in that lovely church about the king, he said of him, "He was the most loyal man that ever lived in this age," and even of a king no greater

[1] See Paget, *The Redemption of War*, p. 44, for the story and the lessons it suggests.

word could be spoken. He never forgot the vows he made when he knelt alongside his young bride—the words were written not only on the ring, but on his heart. If we are loyal also to God, our country, and our home, we too shall live lives that may be truly called kingly and queenly.

First, you see, there is *loyalty to God.*

All brave men have begun there. The great heroes of the Old Testament all made that their starting-place. Moses forsook Pharaoh's palace, but he clung to God. Joshua was willing to let all the nation choose whom they would for leaders, but for himself and his household there was only one choice, "We will serve the Lord."

The great judges that were his successors only accomplished their difficult tasks when the same spirit animated them. In later days David, Elijah, Jeremiah, Daniel are all conspicuous instances of a like loyalty. In stories that may be less familiar to you about the times of the Maccabees, we find brave fathers and sons who fought and suffered terrible hardships for the same faith. They would not bow the knee in idolatrous

worship, nor suffer the sanctuaries of their fathers to be defiled, and so their loyalty saved once more the nation they loved. It was the same with the first disciples of Jesus, when brought before rulers and courts. "Whether we ought to obey God rather than men, judge ye," was their defence in speaking in the presence of those who acknowledged the precepts but neglected the practice. Countless martyrs at the stake, numberless confessors in prison and in loss of all things have proved the same truth. Luther marches into Worms, "though there be as many devils there as tiles on the roofs," and before a great council of his enemies cries, "Hereon (that is, 'on the truth of God') I take my stand; I can no other. May God help me." We may never be tried as they were, but we must show the same constancy. God is to be first always. We are to do nothing, say nothing, think nothing He would disapprove; and when, haply, we do transgress, we are to seek at once His forgiveness, and pray for the grace of watchfulness in the future.

Second, *loyalty to our country.*

This is an easy duty to most people. They are patriotic. At such a time as this, when we are at war with another nation, the spirit of love for our country runs higher than ever; men dare not be disloyal. Yet there are always some people that either are or pretend to be dissatisfied with their own land. They are ashamed of it, and say they wish they were natives of some other country, or else profess indifference to any country, and call themselves citizens of the world. There is always something disgraceful in such conduct. Patriotism is not a feeling to be ashamed of, it is one of which we should be proud. Jesus Christ was a great patriot, He loved His own countrymen before all else. Paul was a great patriot, and would have been willing to suffer anything at God's hand, if thereby he might have benefited his fellow Jews. In the heroic days of the Maccabees there were men who were so disloyal to their own people that they did everything they could to destroy the evidence of their being Jews, and in manners, dress, speech, and other

ways copied the Greeks, and so brought shame on all their friends. We despise such conduct, we feel such people could not be trusted anywhere. Sometimes when one is in a foreign country there is a temptation to try to pass for a native of that land. Apart altogether from the risk of being discovered (as were some of the Boers in the present war, who had dressed themselves in Highland dress and then mounted on horseback!), it is most frequently a sure way of losing much that we should otherwise gain. In visiting America I have often been greeted in words like these, "You are an Englishman, well, let us grasp hands, because we are all one people and have one great work to do." That is a reward for loyalty to one's own land. I read an incident of the present war that described how fourteen of our soldiers pressed right up to one of the enemies' trenches in South Africa, though they saw the muzzles of a hundred rifles pointed at them. They had almost reached them when the enemy, as if moved by a common impulse, laid down their arms, sprang over the breastworks, greeted the British soldiers, and said:

"There is no standing against courage like yours. Lay down your arms and make your way back to your own lines; we will not fire till we see you safely there." Loyalty touches the hearts of foes.

Thirdly, *loyalty to home*.

I love to hear children say, "My home, my father, my mother are the best all." They are miserable boys and girls who would exchange their home for another, on any grounds of mere wealth, comfort, or splendour. Love makes home, and love makes loyalty. The loyal children are those of a loving home.

ONE OF GOD'S MIRRORS

"In minimis Deus maximus."

"Thou didst reveal them unto babes."—MATT. xi. 25.

THE words of this motto stand above the entrance door of the classroom in the botanical garden of a university town in Central Germany. They tell us how God shews Himself to be greatest in the things that are least, and have an obvious reference to the wonders that the science of botany discloses to us. Every little plant has its own special and peculiar beauties, some of which, indeed, we can see with our naked eye if we are only careful to notice them, but others require the aid of the most powerful of microscopes to reveal. Have you ever looked at the centre of a daisy?—many of you perhaps think that the familiar flower with its yellow centre and ring of white petals is a single blossom, but the fact is, that every separate

part of that white fringe and yellow centre is an individual flower. If you look at the yellow part with an ordinary magnifying glass, you will find that there are little cup-shape flowers in great quantity scattered over it. This is only one of the commonest instances of how the wonderful minuteness of nature, the more we examine it, shews us the greater beauty. But it is not until we take a really fine microscope, and by its help examine the leaves and stems of flowers, and seeds of plants with the greatest care, that we come to know how wonderful are the least of the works of nature. We shall discover then that there are many plants so small that we cannot even see them with our naked eye, and that even the tiny hairs on the stems of others are exquisite in their form and variety. What is true of plant life is true of every other form of the physical universe. It is often a question whether the wonders that the telescope displays in the heavens above us, or those that the microscope shews in the world about our feet, are the most marvellous. We need not trouble ourselves to decide that question, however,

for both are beautiful, and in both we can, if we choose, see God. One of the greatest astronomers used to say that he loved to study the stars and discover the laws that controlled their action, because he felt that he was thinking God's thoughts after Him.

There is great joy in entering the studio of some noted artist, and seeing all his pictures, and still more in examining the sketches which he has made as studies for his finished works.

Or, to take another instance, how interesting we find it to pass from room to room in some great manufactory, and trace the processes whereby the articles there made reach their completion. We can then understand a little of the great mind that has produced the pictures, or planned the perfect methods of producing such finely finished work. We could not imagine that all these were simply gathered together by chance in one place.

Nothing perhaps impresses us more than the great care that is exerted over the tiniest processes and the most delicate lines. So, when we see in the world that every tiny

form of life has its own peculiar and special structure, adapting it perfectly for the work it has to do, we cannot but feel sure that one Master mind has executed it all and keeps it in order.

But the words our Lord Jesus used, and which I have placed alongside the motto, give it an even wider application. Jesus was fond of telling us how God loved the little things. The lilies of the field, the birds of the air, and the beasts of the forest were His special charge. Those little sparrows of which men thought so slightly, that if one were to pay the price of four of them in the market-place he would have one thrown into the bargain, "Those little birds," said Jesus, "have their life-history known to the Father in heaven, and nothing happens to them without His loving and watchful eye noting it, and His heart understanding its meaning." Then the life of Jesus is itself an illustration of the principle this motto teaches. Men sought for God only among the great things of earth. They thought when the Christ came, He must come with the pomp and

glory of an earthly king, with the wisdom and dignity of the learned teachers with whom men were acquainted. But when Jesus came it was in the form of a little child —a baby, not only weak, but poor. Greatness and richness and learning did not appear to Jesus to be passports into the Kingdom of God. His disciples did not understand this, neither did the multitude, and when women brought their little ones to Him these men would fain have driven them back; but Jesus had to become the children's champion, and say that in the face of a little child men could best see what God would have them become. We get a new thought about God when we learn not only that He loves little things, but that we see Him more clearly in little things than in great. I suppose all little children are more or less afraid of big things, a strange kind of horror often haunts us in the mere overwhelming size of an object. The big, gaunt, grim trees of the forest with their tossing giant arms, the huge city with its whirl and noise and tramping multitudes, the vast, wandering, solitary house —all these things breed terror in us. But the

little things are our friends. The flowers, the animals that we can fondle and can take care of, the little babies that we love to nurse, the dainty things that we delight to have about us for their very smallness—"dear little things," as we call them—these are what we love. And does it not help us to understand God, to find Him near, to find Him real, to find Him loving?—to be told that in such little things God becomes more clear to us than in the big, strange, unfamiliar and great ones. Mere grandeur might overwhelm and stun us, though it might be great to look upon, but we could never feel comfortable to live with it. God wishes us to feel at home with Him, and he says that nobody can understand Him so easily as a little child. Let us not, then, have any fear of God, that is, not be afraid of Him because we think He is far off and too terrible to approach. Let us remember how Jesus said He had spoken His messages more clearly to the little ones than to any one else, and go to Him with all our joys, our griefs, our hopes, and our fears, and be assured that He will hear and help us. I shall finish this talk by repeating to

you some lovely little verses that I wish you to learn and remember—

"A baby to a Baby prays—
Oh, Infant Jesus, meek and mild,
From 'mid the glory and the rays,
Look on a little child.

As one child to another may,
He talks without a thought of fear,
Commending to a child to-day
All that a child holds dear:—

His father, mother, brother, nurse,
His cat, his dog, his bird, his toys,
Things that make up the universe
Of darling girls and boys.

All sheep and horses, lambs and cows,
He counts them o'er, a motley crew,
And children in the neighbour's house,
And all the people too.

His friends, why, all the world's his friend,
This four-years' darling, golden curled;
'Tis long before it has an end,
The Bede-roll of his world.

A child lifts up his little hands
Unto a Child; and it may be
The host of heaven at gazing stands
That tender sight to see."

THE MANNERS OF A COURT

"Manners makyth man."

"Be courteous."—I. PET. iii. 8.

I AM not sure that I like this motto, neither am I sure that I believe it to be true. It altogether depends upon how we understand it. Read just upon the surface it is certainly not true. I have seen books upon etiquette, —that is, upon how to conduct oneself in society,—and it might be possible to get up all these directions so perfectly that one would never make a single mistake in the social conduct of life, and yet be altogether far away from the ideal of high and noble conduct. You have doubtless often seen beautiful articles of furniture that seem to be made of finely polished oak, walnut, or mahogany wood, but if you had tested them you would have found that the rarer wood was only a fraction of an inch in thickness,

and the real material was wood of a much more common and less expensive sort. Such a method of constructing furniture is what we call veneer. How many people's manners are of the same sort, a polished surface hiding a common and perhaps worthless character. But there is a good side to the subject of "manners." However sterling and strong a man may be, he is not the better, but the worse, for being rough and rude. He may think it is a sign of independence, but it is rather ignorance, or the worst and most foolish form of pride.

It is untrue to say that a man is made by his manners, it is also untrue that a man can ever be all he ought to be if he is unmannerly. Truly gentle manners, however, may be possible to many people who are strangers to the conventions of society. Some of the most perfect gentlemen and ladies I have ever met have been found among the ranks of the poor: they would have felt very awkward in the drawing-rooms of the wealthy, but they never failed in gracious courtesy to those with whom they met. The real spirit of courtesy is that which is dis-

played in kindly and thoughtful consideration for others. When any one in our company makes a mistake, those of us who know better should never laugh at it, or even notice it if possible, but try to conceal it and make it easy for the person to recover his feeling of ease and self-respect. We should not be conscious of our own importance and wisdom, but so humble minded as to forget ourselves so as to make more of those round about us. The very soul of courtesy is to follow Paul's counsel, and "each to esteem other better than himself." Paul was himself not only the soul of honour, but the most perfectly courteous gentleman. If you read his little letter to his friend Philemon you will find how perfect his manners were. He does not impose upon his friend's kindness, nor yet exercise the rights he might have done ; but places himself on a level with the runaway slave for whom he is pleading, and by his gentle kindness makes his plea most perfectly persuasive. It was so in his relation with everybody with whom he came into contact, and you will find in all his letters the same gentle thoughtfulness.

The word courtesy (I daresay most of you know) is derived from the word court, and means, therefore, the bearing of the men and women who frequent the court of the king. In a king's palace there must necessarily be a great many observances, forms, and ceremonies that are not in place in the lower ranks of society. The dignity of the palace and the greatness of the monarch demand it. Now, we are also courtiers, we also have the right of entrance to a palace, we also should bear continually the air of the companions of a king. Our manners should be those of the court of Christ. One of our old poets calls Him "the first true gentleman that ever lived," and so He is our perfect model in manners, as in all else. He was gentleness itself to all the poor and suffering; patience itself with the foolish and dull, and very pity with the erring and sinful. We are not, then, to mistake politeness for goodness, but to understand that the good character best reveals itself by polite conduct and gracious speech. Politeness, one has said, is the "flower of humanity." You know how dull the world would be were there no flowers: if

all the earth were one cold grey, and no variety of colour made the world bright in its beauty. Just so may men and women be good, but if they have not the fair beauty of courtiers their goodness is unattractive, and loses more than half its influence. We should remember that God calls us not only to holiness, but to the beauty of holiness, and courtesy is one of the fairest flowers in the "garden of God." When Peter tells his fellow-Christians to be courteous, he gives them the best rule for becoming so; for the words so rendered really mean, "be humble minded." We shall not fail in true courtesy if we always think more about other people than we do about ourselves. If we are anxious to be favourites with those we meet, and to be well loved as we make our way through life, nothing will help us better than to understand thus the true and best meaning of the old motto of Winchester School, "Manners makyth man."

We are reminded by our poet Tennyson that

> "Manners are not idle, but the fruit
> Of loyal nature and of noble mind,"

so true is it that the heart of a man is mirrored in his speech and actions. Goethe, the great poet of Germany, has also said that there is "no outward sign of courtesy that does not rest on a deep moral foundation." This "deep moral foundation" is love. The primary law of courtesy is the great commandment on which Jesus so often laid stress, "Love your neighbour as yourself." There is a beautiful story told about Saint Francis. One evening he and his companion arrived at a late hour at the house of a rich and powerful lord. Their host treated them with the greatest kindness, and welcomed them as honoured guests, even serving them with his own hands. He afterwards promised to aid them in every way he could with money and gifts of all sorts. When they left the house the next morning Francis was so pleased that he said to his companion, "Know, dear brother, that courtesy is one of the qualities of God Himself, who, of His courtesy, giveth His sun and His rain to the just and the unjust: and courtesy is the sister of charity, the which quencheth hate and keepeth love alive."

Never let us forget these golden words, "Courtesy is the sister of Love." If these two go hand in hand down the highway of our life we shall indeed be happy, and shed joy all round us.

Jesus was Himself the embodiment of gracious courtesy. His first miracle was an act designed to free His host from embarrassment. It was an act of genuine courtesy. Indeed, one great preacher has said that this alone was its immediate purpose. "We come," says the Bishop of Oxford, "to nothing weightier or more adequate to the world's needs than the considerateness of courtesy. If this be so, it may be well to ask whether we have usually done justice to the greatness of courtesy, and realised its true place in Christian ethics; or whether we have treated as an attractive ornament for moral excellence what really is an intrinsic part of goodness, a plain invariable duty, bound up essentially in the bond of perfectness. We may feel at once that constant courtesy, unwearied and unerring in all relations, towards all men, is a very rare grace, as rare, it may even be, as saintli-

ness itself; we may also feel that there is a singular power and distinction in these few lives, in which we have felt sure of its unfailing presence. And perhaps these two thoughts may give us further warrant for inquiring somewhat carefully whether courtesy is not a more serious and imperative task than men generally think it."[1] The man who thus writes so beautifully about courtesy is himself the embodiment of the grace. Let me tell you one lovely story about him. Soon after his elevation to the bishopric he was visiting a little town in his diocese for a confirmation service. When it was over he discovered that one candidate — a servant maid, was unable to be present, as she was confined to her room by sickness. The bishop went straightway to the house, asked permission of the girl's mistress, and in her own room permitted her to enjoy the help and blessing of the service. Such tender thoughtfulness is the highest proof of Christian courtesy. To tread fully in the steps of Jesus, we must be partakers in such courteous conduct as marked Him.

[1] *Studies in the Christian Character*, Paget, p. 212.

Before taking leave of this subject, let me quote to you some lines that appeared in one of the daily papers, on the motto that is our text to-day—

"When I was young I used to hear
That 'manners makyth man';
Now travel far and travel near,
Find manners if you can.
We're all in such a hurry now,
For business or for place,
Not one has time to make a bow
Or greet a friendly face.

When I was young we used to greet
The rich as well as poor,
Rejoicing old and young to meet
Around the old church door;
But now—we toss our heads and sneer,
Push in—as best we can:
For no one cares a jot to hear
That 'manners makyth man.'

O! for the ancient 'gentilesse'
Of days long, long ago;
O! for the old-world courtliness,
So sweet to high and low;
O! for the grand old reverence,
That honours all it can,—
Displaying in the truest sense,
That 'manners makyth man.'"

[In connection with this subject of "Courtesy," one of the most admirable guilds for

children is the "National Guild of Courtesy," membership in which is perfectly simple, and involves a subscription *of only* 1*d. a year.* The rules are drawn up with great clearness, and cannot fail to be of the greatest help to children. A branch in every school throughout the land would be of enormous benefit. I can conceive of few forms of Christian service more suitable for young ladies in our churches than that of forming such branches. The Honorary Secretary is H. E. Norton, Esq., 56 Old Bailey, London, E.C. In connection with the guild is published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co. the excellent *Book of Courtesy*, and also the *Courtesy Reader*, volumes that should be in every school library, and read by every scholar in our day schools.]

A CHINESE COUNSEL

"Nourish your mind, and nurse your spirits."

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, think on these things."—PHIL. iv. 8

TO-DAY my motto comes from a language and a people other than all the rest we have had. There were sold in London not long ago some seals that had once belonged to the Emperor of China, and upon one of them were the words which I have chosen to speak to you about this morning. I do not know who first composed the motto, but perhaps it was the utterance of one of the great and wise teachers of the Chinese people. Some of you will know enough French to remember that the words nourish and nurse are simply different forms of the same original; but in the usage of every day we employ the one to signify the act

of feeding, and the other that of a more general care. Our bodies need to be fed as well as to be trained, and we have to take care not only that the food we eat is good, but that it is suitable. It is not always what we like best that is most good for us to have, and even if it is something that might not hurt us it may not be the food on which we shall grow most rapidly strong and healthy; but these words do not speak about our bodies, they speak about our minds and our spirits. The wise man who wrote them knew that the most important parts of our nature were those that we do not see. Our minds need food as well as our bodies. Now, you boys and girls may think your minds get more than enough food in the lessons you have to learn day by day, and I am not going to speak about these, because I know quite well that your parents and teachers will look after your instruction in these matters; but I am thinking of the kind of food you give your minds when you are not compelled to learn. Most of us, I know, read for our pleasure and amusement,—at least, I hope

we do, for there is no habit better worth learning than that of loving to read. But then, it is so easy to choose wrong or foolish books. I do not wish you to be always reading the Bible, or what some of you call "good books," but I do wish you not to waste your time and spoil your taste by reading rubbish. There are plenty of fine books that are full of interest, and I am often surprised that my girl and boy friends do not know them. Take, for instance, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, the *Fairy Tales* of Hans Andersen and Grimm, the fine stories of the old Greek and Latin poets, as well as the lovely tales of the Middle Ages. You can find all these beautifully and simply told by many writers, but if you want one example read the *Tanglewood Tales* of Nathanael Hawthorne. Then there is so much beautiful poetry to read and learn: it need not be a task, it ought to be a pleasure. Some people tell me they do not like poetry, and I do not wonder at it, because they have never set themselves to read it when they were young. I know some of you, when a new dish appears on

the table, say you will not have any of it, because you do not like it. How do you know, if you have never tried? But I have seen you persuaded to try it, and very soon declare it was your favourite food. Now, it is just the same with books. We can easily learn to love the best if we begin young enough and persevere. In time it will become impossible for us to read the things that are poor and common, still less those that are hurtful.

But there is another side to this motto; it tells us to nurse our spirits. You know how tenderly a little baby has to be nursed; how gently one has to hold it, and how lovingly all things have to be done for it. The nursing of a little child is not one act merely, but a continual round of gracious and tender service. In an old Greek monument in the British Museum, called the "Harpy Tomb," you may see some figures like winged angels carrying what seem to be little babies in their arms. Their faces are full of an expression of sweet and tender love, as if they would encourage and console the little

ones they are carrying. It is said that the old artist meant these figures to signify the angel messengers that carry the souls of the departed to the other world. They are strange and new to it, like the little children upon earth, and need to be nursed. It was a beautiful thought, but perhaps it is more beautiful still to tell us that we have to be the careful nurses of our own souls. More delicate than any little child is the life of our spirit; we have to tend it with the greatest care, if we would save it from the dangers all around. It is not enough to read or to learn the lessons of the Bible and other good books, but we must live out their teaching. If we learn but one short text in the day, we must seek to apply its teaching to our conduct. Another way whereby we may nurse our spirits is by prayer. Our prayers need not be long, in fact, they are often far better to be short, but they must be frequent. We should remember that to pray simply means to speak to Jesus Christ and to His Father, and that we can do this at any moment. There is no better way to make our hearts strong

than to spend much of our time speaking to God. But then, a wise nurse is not satisfied with simply feeding the little child and keeping it out of harm's way, she must also let it exercise its limbs and strengthen its body, so we must exercise our spiritual nature. We have all to meet temptation and to seek to overcome it, this is what strengthens our hearts and makes them able to serve God truly. Not to be kept away from evil, but to overcome it, is the true spirit of the Christian child. When we are tempted to think or speak or act wrongly, we should apply for the strength that God has promised to give us in order "to resist the evil and cleave to the good."

HOLDING ON

"Grip fast."

"Hold fast that which is good."—1 THESS. v. 21.

THERE is a picturesque story told about the origin of this motto. It is said that when Margaret, Queen of Scotland, was fording a rapid river, then in flood, she was carried from her horse by the force of the torrent. Her girdle was seized by Bartholomew de Leslyn, and as he bravely bore her toward the bank she repeatedly cried, "Grip fast." In token of his heroic deed the queen afterwards conferred on him these words as his motto, and they have ever since remained that of the Leslie family, his descendants. I mean to-day to bid you "Grip fast" three things, the doing of which will render your life worth living—

1. Grip fast the true.
2. Grip fast the Unseen.

3. Grip fast the Christ.

1. Truth is not so easy a thing to keep fast hold of as we often think. Have you ever looked in at those windows in London where are displayed the so-called diamonds manufactured by various companies? If you were to have put into your hand some real stones from the mines of South Africa, and some taken from the cases in those windows, you children would find it very hard, if not impossible, to tell the difference, and to pick out the true stones from the false. The diamond merchant would come along, however, and in a few minutes make an unerring selection. Why? Because he possesses infallible tests, that experience and skill have taught him how to use, so that he may not be deceived. Now, I do not suppose that any of us could be deceived by poorly cut glass laid alongside real stones —it would only be by skilful imitation. It is just the same with truth. Few of us are likely to be led astray by gross lying, or the temptation to practise it: that is too ugly and distasteful. Few of us would cheat openly and crudely. But there are

"white lies" that we can ourselves excuse and explain to others. It is so easy, and no one will be any the worse for it if we get just a hint from some one, as we are doing an examination paper or working out a problem in algebra. We would not do anything unfair in a competitive examination where another was to suffer by our success; but now, where nothing depends upon it but our own comfort, ease, and temporary praise, it is easy to fall into the snare. Nor is it difficult to find excuses. Of course, we really knew, but we had forgotten for the minute. We should give similar aid to any one else to-morrow and think nothing of it. Or we argue thus. It was not really deception,—we only said it in fun, and really the fellow was a great muff to take it in earnest. We think, on the whole, we are rather hardly used to be blamed for it, for if there was any fault, it lay in his stupidity to be so easily taken in. But all this comes of a loose hold on the truth, of a tampering with our conscience, of a forgetting about the sure test we carry with us.

Never let us act in any way for which we have to excuse ourselves, or to hesitate as to whether or not it is right. *Grip fast the true.*

2. Grip fast the Unseen is not so obvious a statement to boys and girls. Suppose we were to enter some beautiful cathedral that had been centuries in building, and we overheard two people talking about it. The one examined the workmanship of each column and groined arch, and discussed how long they had taken to chisel, and how much money each had cost. Then he figured up the number of strokes of the hammer that had been required to make each figure in the carving, how many pounds had been spent in the decoration of the tombs and in the fitting of the chancel, and at last set forth his whole idea of the building in a paper covered with figures as to the number of men employed, the tons of material used, and the quantities of gold and silver expended in its erection. But the other examined it all in quite a different way. He spoke of the love that had prompted its founders, of the patience and tender care

that had gathered the materials from many lands, of the exquisite skill and delight of the artists who had spent themselves without stint, even in obscure corners where no man might even see their work. His eyes became suffused with tears as he thought of the scenes of joy and sorrow these walls had witnessed, as he recalled the chant of crusaders, the wail of stricken folk in days of pestilence, the visits of pilgrims, and the stirring voices of great preachers. Who understood and valued the cathedral most truly? Surely the second, who hardly noticed what was seen by the eye, save as it was a symbol of what was unseen. Some of the most wonderful words in the Bible seem to be those that describe Moses as enduring, "as seeing Him who is invisible." That is the secret of all courage, real success, and beauty of character — to dwell with mind and heart on the Unseen. The poet Wordsworth believed it was easier for children to do this than for grown men and women—

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy,"

he sang,

"Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy:
The youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day."

And Jesus Christ must have believed it too, and He knew the truth. For speaking to little children He said, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Cling to your inheritance, then, boys and girls, and grip fast those things which are best, though in themselves unseen — purity, obedience, gentleness, faith, hope, and love.

3. And this it will be easy for you to do if you grip fast Jesus Christ. Him too, perhaps, you will say you cannot see. You may have felt some sympathy with the writer of the hymn we sometimes sing—

"But O, dear Lord, we cry
That we Thy face could see!
Thy blessed face one moment's space,
Then might we follow Thee!"

Yet Jesus foresaw all this, and told us that the highest blessing belonged to those who had not seen him as He appeared on earth, and yet believed in Him. Zurbriggen, the famous Swiss mountain-guide, tells us in his life how he often had letters from gentlemen in England and other places asking him to climb with them. They had never seen him, they had only heard about him from those whom he had safely guided in difficult and dangerous expeditions. Then he used to send them a message to meet him somewhere in the Alps, that they might climb together, in order that he might test their powers.

We have plenty who can tell us about Jesus Christ—those whom He has guided, helped, and protected. Now, let us decide to take Him as our own Guide. Let us put our own hand in His and hold it fast, for He will always firmly grasp our feeble fingers. Let us really make our own the last glad words of the same hymn I quoted a minute or two ago—

"Within our heart of hearts,
In nearest nearness be;

Set up Thy throne within Thine own:
Go, Lord,—we follow Thee."

That is the prayer Jesus will never leave unanswered, and if we grip Him fast He will never let us go.

READINESS

"Ready, aye Ready."

"What I say unto you I say unto all, 'Watch!'"—MARK xiii. 37.

THE story of the origin of this motto is as follows. It is said that when James v. of Scotland was on the eve of advancing against the English, and had assembled his nobles at Fala, none of them were willing to follow the royal standard with the single exception of Sir John Scott, who expressed his readiness to serve with his king in any circumstances. The monarch, in token of his pleasure at Sir John's loyalty, granted him the right to add a sheaf of spears to his coat of arms, and also the above motto. In Sir Walter Scott's poem, "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," he thus alludes to the story—

"Hence, in fair remembrance worn,
Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;

Hence his high motto stands revealed,
'Ready, aye Ready,' for the field."

I mean to take the words this morning as expressive of three things—(1) of the spirit that should mark us all; (2) of the attitude always assumed by the powers of evil; and (3) of the constant character of Christ.

First, of ourselves.

The quality of readiness is the one that more almost than any other ensures success in life. The man who succeeds is the man who is capable of seizing every advantage and opportunity. We can see in our school life how quickness tells; it is not everything, but it is a great deal. The boy or girl who not only has learned the tasks well, but is ready witted enough to apply the knowledge gained to the various questions and problems that come up for solution, wins the highest place; and in our games how true it is that the quick eye and the ready hand gain the mastery in the cricket, football, or hockey field. And when we come to the higher levels of life, we find how this quality is more than ever essential. Paul makes it part of his Christian armour, and sets it

alongside truth, righteousness, and faith,—none of these great gifts of the soul can be used effectively without the quality of readiness. No one that is unprepared, no matter how highly gifted, can make the most efficient use of his gifts; it is like having immense riches all locked up in some strong room of which the owner has lost the key. The grace of readiness enables us to put to the best use all the talents we possess; while without it the best talents may be largely ineffective. With it, on the other hand, even moderate gifts may enable us to do much. It is a quality also which will help us to overcome many difficulties and to encounter grave dangers. I have read of the trying experiences that sometimes come to great soldiers on the day of a great battle. A company may have to stand inactive for long weary hours at one extreme of the line; they see the battle raging all round them, and yet they have no duty but to wait for the commander's signal. At last, when the day is nearly over, it comes; and in a few minutes their part is played in the victory that crowns or the defeat that marks

the day with disgrace. The special trial involved in such a task is to allow themselves to get careless, owing to the long waiting time. They are apt to think that no opportunity will come to them; and as hour follows hour, to become less vigilant, and when the testing moment arrives to be found unable to meet its claims. There is no greater trial for courage than to have to stand, as some of our regiments had to do in the recent South African campaign, for a long time under fire without being permitted to discharge a single rifle in return. More serious than many moral lapses of a much graver kind is the temper which is never prepared for any emergency when it comes, and is always putting off the necessity for preparation. One of the kings in English history has been branded with a very ugly name because he was always lacking in that quality of preparedness; he has been known to all subsequent ages as Ethelred the Unready. Let us see to it that we do not gain such a title for ourselves in the more serious and strenuous duties that belong to Christ's Kingdom.

Secondly, of the forces of evil.

These, we are told, are always on the outlook seeking to surprise us; Peter says our adversary is "as a roaring lion, walking about seeking whom he may devour." This attitude of fierce and prowling menace is characteristic of the powers of evil. You know what travellers do in South Africa, when they camp for the night they have to take great care that watch-fires are lit all round, and beyond the glow of the fires can be heard the movements of the lions and other fierce beasts of prey. If by any chance the fires are allowed to die down, then the wild animals spring into the circle and carry away some unfortunate sleeper in their teeth. They will hang about for hours in the hope of an entrance, and nothing but the dawn will drive them back to the desert.

Now, sin is a foe of this kind, it is both merciless and persistent; it will not spare, neither will it leave us alone so long as there seems an opportunity of finding a weak spot in our armour. In the old duelling days one method pursued by the combatants was for

one swordsman to harass and press his enemy until he had utterly fatigued him, and then to take advantage of his temporary weakness by a swift and sudden thrust. These are the tactics the devil often adopts in dealing with us; he wearies us until we are found off our guard, then he enters. There is great need therefore of watchfulness, for we have not only to resist the evil, but to carry the war into the enemies' camp.

There is a story told of a great master of fence who was training a pupil for a duel he had to fight. When the lessons were over the pupil in wonder said to his instructor: "Sir, you have only taught me the thrusts, how am I to defend myself?"—"Leave the parries to your enemy," was the reply; "suffice it for you to attack him persistently." We also must be ever on the alert to make direct attacks upon sin: to slay our evil habits, and to put down all the wickedness that surrounds us.

Thirdly, of Christ.

Away on one of the northern shores of Scotland, where the cliff faces the wild sea, is a lifeboat house, with the words *Ready, aye*

Ready upon it; could there be a finer motto for lifeboat men! It seems as if the boat were itself expressing the purpose for which it exists, and the eagerness with which it desires to go out on its errands of mercy. No matter how terrible the storm, how wild the night, how great the risk, the lifeboat has always its prow turned to the waves, and is in readiness to be launched. Just thus is it with Jesus Christ: you remember how when His disciples were in dire straits He appeared to them walking on the waves of Galilee, and straightway the storm became a calm, and the frightened seamen were in safety. Wherever Christ sees darkness, danger, and sin, there He is always ready to put out to the rescue. The greater our need, the more certain are we of having His help.

Some of you have read the stories of the old Greek heroes, and of how when in great danger the gods who had them under their special protection would come down from Olympus and fight by their side, or cast over them the protection of their sacred shield: thus was it often in the battles

round Troy, or with Æneas in his perilous wanderings.

But far better and more true than all such fabled aid is the true assistance Christ affords to His own soldiers. "Lo, I am with you alway," He says to us, and the readiness He desires to find in His followers is the temper of His own heart. Thus it is that He is able and willing to bestow upon us the gift He knows we need; it is our fault if we have it not, for Christ, who says, "Watch," has also promised that what we ask Him He will gladly give. If it is His will that we be ready soldiers, it is His power that will make us such.

"Leave no unguarded place,
No weakness of the soul,—
Take every virtue, every grace,
And fortify the whole.
To keep your armour bright,
Attend with constant care,
Still walking in your Captain's sight,
And watching unto prayer."

THE CONSTANT KNIGHT

"Tous fois chevalier."

"Always bearing about the marks of the Lord Jesus."—GAL. vi. 17.

THIS motto, more than many, clearly reveals its origin. It comes from those days of knight-errantry, where the noblemen of every country went about not only in search of adventure, as we are often told, but to carry everywhere with them a living example of obedience, bravery, gentleness, kindness, truth, self-sacrifice, and all the knightly virtues. You have heard how they began their life, perhaps some of you have seen the beautiful picture that represents the vigil of the young aspirant to knighthood's honours. All his armour and weapons, you remember, were brought into the church and laid in front of the altar, then as the evening shadows were falling the young knight

began his long solitary watch. There he had to remain during the hours of darkness in watching, meditation, and prayer, beside the arms he was to wield not only for his over-lord on earth, but for his King in Heaven. Clad in white he knelt on the cold stones, and the thoughts of what that new life meant passed rapidly through his mind. It meant leaving home and friends, the exchange of many comforts for long hard marches and dangerous and difficult travel. He would meet many dangers, and these were far more terrible than the dangers that beset travellers now, for there were few good roads and far less helps by the way. Great trackless forests had to be crossed, enemies' countries had to be traversed, the haunts of wild lawless men had to be avoided or captured. There were terrors also of supernatural kinds that we no longer fear, but to which the ignorance and superstition of those days rendered every one liable. Added to all this, wherever he found any one in trouble, oppressed, injured, or a prisoner, he was bound by his knightly vows to give aid, at whatever cost to himself. Thus he had

much to think of as he knelt there, and good reason to pray urgently for God's help and strength.

At length the morrow dawns. His friends come and arm him, he mounts his horse, rides up to the palace, is received and blessed by his sovereign, and rides forth upon his quest. There, in the sight of all the people, as he rides proudly through the city streets, or presently in the list when he breaks his first lance in the sports of the tournay, with all eyes fixed upon him, many in pride and love, it is easy to behave as becomes a knight. No one would dream of being a coward or shirking any office that attached to his position then—all is too new and delightful, every one is too kind and ready to applaud. But it is different when he rides out into unknown lands. He is often alone then, and has no one to cheer and encourage him. There are no bright eyes and loving hearts watching his every movement and applauding his every success. It is so easy now to avoid a menacing danger, and fancy no one will even hear of his cowardice, to turn aside from the cry of some injured one that seeks

his aid, because she seems uninteresting or poor, or because the task to which he is invited seems tedious or fraught with much danger and little honour. Sometimes, too, his great success tempts him to forget his vows of gentleness and humility. He reaps great renown: he becomes master of some grand castle, and then he begins to abuse his power, to tyrannise over all that are under him, to be churlish to every one that seeks his protection or help. He is far from the court and the king, and he thinks he may become a ruler in his own right. He wins over others to his own manner of thinking, and soon raises a standard of revolt, and actually becomes a menace to those very brother-knights whom he has sworn to help. Or again, he wanders out into lands where he is tempted to forget his loyalty, purity, temperance, and nobleness. He sinks to the lower level of his new associates, and becomes a sensual, pleasure-loving man, with all the memories of that fair youth forgotten, the strains of the heavenly music no longer heard, and the visions of that vigil-eve, with its sacred promises and high

resolves, vanished for ever. That this is no fancy picture I have drawn you may prove by reading the chronicles of the ages of chivalry. Old Sir Thomas Malory is full of such stories, and in Tennyson's lovely idylls of Arthur's court you will find these lessons and warnings on every page. In the story of Gareth and Lynette, for example, there are the four rude, wild knights who have no claim to the title, for they

> "do but what they will;
> Courteous or bestial from the moment, such
> As have nor law nor king."

In spite of armour, castle, strength, and skill of arms they are no true knights, while he who is disguised as a scullion in the kitchen of Arthur's palace has the true spirit of chivalry. He had longed for a new career in his mother's halls. He had pled with her to let him ride forth, saying—

> "Man am I grown, a man's work must I do—
> Follow the deer?—follow the Christ, the King,
> Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King—
> Else, wherefore born?"

To test his purpose his mother l

seek the court of Arthur disguised as a poor boy, who sought a place among the menials of the palace. Even to this he stooped, for he felt that "the thrall in person may be free in soul." In this capacity he served with faithfulness, and when the day arrived that the king laid upon him the high claims of knighthood he was ready to meet them, for he had learned obedience.

> "My knights are sworn to vows
> Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
> And loving, utter faithfulness in love,
> And uttermost obedience to the king."

But Gareth's trials were only beginning when he set forth on his first quest, because the lady on whose service he went took him for a servant, and deemed that insult had been poured on her when she was offered such an assistant. She continued to pour abuse and scorn on him all the time they were together. And yet through it all Gareth bore himself with the gentle courtesy of a true knight, "wholly bold . . . and meek withal, as any of Arthur's best."

This story is a kind of parable of our Christians, and the manner in which

we should live. It will not always be possible for us to be in circumstances of ease and safety, of comfort and honour. We shall be often reviled, mocked, misunderstood, but so was Jesus. He "learned obedience by the things that He suffered." There was a hymn we used to sing often when I was a boy, though I am not sure that it is so common now, which expressed the wish to be such knights of heaven's court as He was—

"I want to be like Jesus,
So lowly and so meek,
For no one marked an angry word
That ever heard Him speak.

I want to be like Jesus;
I never, never find
That He, though persecuted, was
To any one unkind."

There is ample opportunity for our exercising the graces of Christian knighthood. Deeds of chivalry are as possible to us now as ever they were to those of Arthur's court. The giant foes we have to face are Intemperance, Cruelty, Selfishness, Pride, and similar sins. The lists in which we have to encounter

them may be the unpoetic ones of the schoolroom, the playground, the workshop, and in later days the committee-room or the council-chamber. There are the enemies, however, and if we are to shew ourselves worthy of the Lord we serve we must wage unceasing war that knows no quarter. There is one way, and one alone, in which we may secure victory. In the old days, when the knight kept vigil in the church beside his armour, he was in the habit of holding his sword up to the altar, as if offering it to Christ, and uttering the prayer, "*In manus tuas, Domine*," "Into Thy hands, O Lord." We must do the same.

"'Into Thy hands, Great Captain!' This was the knight's
calm cry,
When at the dawn of rosy morn
He rode to do or die,—
What day may bring, not mine to see,
'*In manus tuas, Domine!*'"

Our sword of the spirit He Himself is sure to bless, and it will conquer for us all the fiercest foes.

"When Thy soldiers take their swords,
When they speak the solemn words,

When they kneel before Thee here,
Feeling Thee their Father near,—
These Thy children, Lord, defend,
To their help Thy Spirit send.

When the vows that they have made,
When the prayers that they have prayed,
Shall be fading from their hearts;
When the first warm faith departs,—
These Thy children, Lord, defend,
Keep them faithful to the end."

We might very well transform this motto into one which would be of infinite value to us. Suppose we were to read it, "Tous fois chrétien," and then try to make it ours. If we are to be followers of Jesus at all we must be constant followers. A worthy soldier is always a soldier as much in undress as on parade. Paul was always, "in season and out of season," as he said, the true-hearted disciple. There can be no unseasonable time for being a Christian—it is a spirit that should manifest itself in every relation of life. I knew of a football team, belonging to one of the big schools, that on one occasion was playing a match against another school, and some of the latter used bad language. The fellows in the first

school got together at half-time and discussed the situation. They let the other side know that if the practice did not cease at once not only would the match stop, but no further matches would ever be arranged between the schools. It was quite effective, and such a lesson could not be forgotten. We see, therefore, that we must be Christians just where we are, doing Christ's will, because we are His sworn followers. Let us be His now, and His always, and our life will be glad and free, beautiful and gracious. Everything that is worthy we shall enjoy, and everything that is base we shall overcome through His strength, who has promised to make us "more than conquerors."

IN SHELTER

"Parva sub ingenti."

"The shadow of a great rock."—ISA. xxxii. 2.

THESE words form the motto of Prince Edward Island, one of our possessions in the gulf of St. Lawrence, constituting part of the province of Canada, and situated close to Nova Scotia.

The arms of the island show a little tree under the shelter of a big one, whereby it is protected from the rough winds that sweep across the exposed land. This denotes the protection afforded to the small island by the large country of which it forms a part.

The words of the motto imply this consciousness of weakness and the need of clinging to the stronger power, but they also express, I imagine, something more, the pride, namely, of forming part of a great empire. If it is only a small island, yet it

is as truly part of the British Empire as is the largest of all her colonies. The inhabitants have their rights and privileges as imperial citizens, and can claim the protection of all the laws, safeguards, and honours that belong to the subjects of that world-wide dominion.

These two ideas I wish to apply to our relation to Jesus Christ. First of all, we are little and weak, and in ourselves helpless, but if we belong to Him we are made sharers in all His mighty power. We are like the little tree under the shelter of the big one, the rough blasts bend and toss about, but they cannot touch us. Sometimes, near the seashore, you may see whole extents of woodland, and all the trees are bent in one direction. Those nearest to the sea are short and stunted. The trees increase gradually in height, and the whole wood looks as if it had been cut with a knife, until at last, far inland, the trees attain their normal height, for the outside belt exposed to the sea breezes has suffered in its efforts to shelter its more favoured sisters. They only grow tall, straight, and well proportioned at

the expense of the others which have borne the brunt of the storm, and lost their own beauty in consequence. Thus was it with Jesus, He came into the world and suffered at the hands of men all kinds of shame and mockery. As the prophet said in his wonderful, poetical description, "He was as a root out of a dry ground, He had no form or comeliness, there was no beauty that we should desire Him. He was despised as one from whom men hid their face, He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed." All this Christ bore that we might not have to bear it, He stands between us and the might of temptation, He protects us from the sirocco (that dry desert wind) of sin.

He tempers the fierce blasts of persecution, and saves His little ones from many difficulties and dangers. To be in the hands of Christ means to be in the safest of shelters!

The other side of the truth of this motto lies in the fact that, because we belong to

Christ, we are sharers in His power and dignity. It does not matter how young a prince of the royal house is, dignity and honour are rendered to him even if he be but a child, and from his earliest years he is taught to respect the traditions of the court. All the glory and honour of long generations are part of his inheritance, and because of them, as well as for his own sake, these forms and ceremonies are observed: child as he is, he soon learns that much depends upon his actions.

I daresay you have all heard the touching story of the late Queen Victoria, how one day her governess let her know she was the next heir to the throne. When the meaning of the statement dawned upon the girl, she threw her arms round her teacher's neck and said eagerly and with great earnestness, "Oh, I *will* be good!" Often before she had rebelled against the drudgery of certain tasks that to her seemed useless, but when she realised all that depended upon her becoming worthy of the great dignity and trust that lay before her, she resolved with God's help to render herself fitted for it; so we, when we

understand that we belong to the Kingdom of Heaven, may be encouraged to think how all its rules and resources are ready to our hand, as well as solemnised by the recollection of how great are the demands that may be made upon us. There are words of a very wise man which I remember hearing years ago, and have never forgotten. The writer of them is Pascal—the great French thinker and scholar. He says: "Do small things as if they were great, because of the majesty of Jesus Christ, who works them in us, and who lives our life; and great things as if they were small and easy, because of His omnipotence." That is the great lesson we have to learn from the thought our motto and text inspire—

"We are only little workers,
Yet we fain would do Thy will;
So we pray Thee, Lord, to help us
Lowly duties to fulfil.

Grant that we, Thy willing workers,
By Thy grace may find at length,
Even children in their weakness
May help others in Thy strength."

There is a further lesson that I think the

words of our motto might teach us. Supposing that some enemy threatened Prince Edward Island, it would be very foolish for the governor of the island to distress himself by attempting to make provision for its defence, and wondering how he could possibly meet so strong a foe with the small forces at his hand. The proper and wise course would be to apply for the protection of the Home Government. Behind him he would have all the strength of the British Empire, and the call for help would at once secure the services of the king's troops. So it is when we are face to face with some temptation, it is not our place to worry about the difficulties, and to cry out because of the dangers. It is true, that we are weak and unable to cope with sin in our own strength, but Jesus Christ is always ready to give us the help we need. If we belong to Him we have the right to claim His assistance, and He will not disappoint us when we seek it. The only course, therefore, open to us when temptation presses hard upon us is to turn to Him at once for aid, and pray that the help we need will be given. This is no

imaginary picture, no poetic fancy, no fairy tale, but the most joyful of realities. Some of you, I hope, know it to be true because you have tested it, but if there are any who have not, I bid you when next some evil thought comes, or a suggestion to sin meets you, go to Christ at once for help, and you will not find Him fail. He is indeed the strong rock to which we may flee, as to a refuge tower, and which, when the fierce sun beats down upon us, affords a welcome shadow.

LOVERS OF SUNLIGHT

"Esto sol testis."

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts."—Ps. cxxxix. 23.

I CAN remember when I was a little boy, one of my great treats was to visit a certain building in my native city in which was situated what was called a "Camera obscura." One entered a dark room, and looked down upon a circular surface of white cloth like a magic lantern screen, whereon, by an arrangement of mirrors, a reflection was thrown of the scenes going on around in the city streets below.

It seemed so curious to watch all these people going about doing their work, amusing themselves, meeting one another, entering their shops and houses, chatting and laughing gaily in the street,—to see, in short, the hundred and one incidents of daily life,

and yet to know that none of them were aware that they were being watched by those who stood within the little tower. It was the sun that enabled us to be such spies upon the doings of our fellows; the sun was the witness that disclosed to us all their movements. But science has discovered that the sun can do much more wonderful things than that; the whole art of photography has simply been the power of using the sun's skill as an artist to draw pictures for us more accurate and beautiful than any we could draw for ourselves. The light of the sun is so penetrating that it can reveal many things our eyes could never discover; thus you have no doubt heard that the photographer's plate has revealed the existence of many stars that the eye of the most skilful astronomer had never seen, and each one of these stars is just a far off sun.

Again, some of you girls know how impossible it is to match the shades of ribbons or silks in any light other than that the sun affords,—how clearly he brings out the delicate distinctions, and makes clear the subtlest

difference of colour. You have noticed too, how, when you are in a room into which the sun's rays are pouring, you can see myriads of tiny little specks dancing in the sunbeams. These were there all the while; the air was laden with the dust and other particles of matter, but you could not see them: it was the sun that disclosed their presence. Now, nothing beautiful need be afraid of the sunlight; the lovely things only become more lovely when he shines upon them; but those which cannot boast of beauty may well seek to hide themselves from his tell-tale glance, for he will only make their ugliness the more manifest. The motto, then, that I have chosen must be that of a very brave man, for it contains the prayer that the sun himself may be my witness. Now, nobody dare use these words unless he was conscious that there was nothing he need fear to be disclosed in his life. I have heard a terrible story of how once someone took a photograph of the great falls of Niagara, and when the picture was finished there was visible in the midst of the boiling torrent

the body of a drowned man. No human eye had been able to see it, but the penetrating glance of the sun revealed it. There is only one light stronger than that of the sun, and this is the light of God.

The prayer of the old Hebrew poet that I have set alongside the motto is even a braver one than that of the motto itself. He prays that God may look into his heart and test his inmost thoughts. Now, would you and I be willing to let God do that? When the sun shines into a room, and shews up the dust and the untidiness that have been hidden perhaps for years, it is only helpful if someone immediately sets about making the room clean and fresh, and arranging all its furniture and pictures, so that once more it may become a joy to live in it; and when the light of God is permitted to shine into our hearts, He shews us so much that is wrong, sinful, and selfish that it will only be a blessing to have that light shining there, if we are ready to have God at the same time help us to make our heart clean and pure. We need the light to shew us what is wrong, as well as what

is right, but once we have seen the evil it must be our task to set ourselves to remove it, and once God has shewn us the fair order in which He would have the room of our life set, we must ask His help to make it as beautiful as He wishes it to be.

The sun is a universal witness. It is not possible to escape his rays anywhere on the surface of this earth of ours. He may hide himself for a time, as in the long night of the arctic winter, or on occasion storm-clouds may obscure his face, but he is always there ready to reveal whatever he shines upon. I remember being greatly impressed by a sundial in the public park at Baltimore. It was so cleverly arranged that when the sun's rays fell upon it the shadow not only told the time at that one place in America, but the numerous other angles of the dial—like the facets of a gem —enabled one to know the hour at many far-distant cities of the world. The one sun gave all these different results — effected these widely varying records. So the light of God is the great universal recorder. In one case it comes to disclose a life in agree-

ment with itself, guided by the precepts of His testimonies, obedient to the utterances of His will. At other times the light of God's word breaking in upon a life shews such ugliness and shame that it almost drives the one who sees it to despair. The first cry of Christian, you remember, in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, was, "What shall I do?" God's word did not bring him comfort at first, but caused him deep distress. It was when he began to get directions from Evangelist that he found his first crumb of comfort. "Do you see yonder wicket-gate?" Evangelist asked. But even that poor Christian was too blind with tears to see. Then said the other, "Do you see yonder shining light?" He said, "I think I do." Then said Evangelist, "Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, so shalt thou see the gate, at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shall do." And John Bunyan tells us what he means by the "shining light," for he sets down in his book the references to the texts that were in his mind. "Thy word is a lamp unto

my feet, and a light unto my path," is one; while the other is, "We have the word of prophecy made more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place." It was the Bible that he regarded as the true light on the way, and we cannot do better than make it our guide from the beginning. I hope all of us who can read do read a few verses every day. Many of us belong to Scripture reading unions of one kind or another. These are excellent, and should prove of great help to us, but the matter of main importance is to store up the words in our hearts and live by them. We must let the light shine clearly in that we may see all that is wrong, and try to set it right. God's book has counsel for every difficulty, a cure for every wrong. We need never remain in doubt as to our course of conduct, if we will only consult it, and have the courage and faith to obey and follow its direction.

But brighter and clearer than all lesser lights is that which comes from our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the light of which all

Scripture speaks, to which all Scripture testifies. He is the sun of our soul, and in Him we can have all the light we need to walk securely. His spirit will lead us, and shew to us the path of safety. A tourist on board one of the Norwegian steamers once said to the captain, "I suppose you know all the rocks and shoals of this coast." "There is no need," was the reply; "I know where the safe channels are, and the deep water." To know where safety lies is our best knowledge, and that we find in the way of Christ. Let us ask Him to help us tread it, to shine on our path for ever with a brighter and brighter light that, like the sun of the northern summer, never sets, but only dips to the horizon to herald a still brighter morrow.

THE PRICE OF VICTORY

"Non est sine pulvere palma."

"Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible."—1 COR. ix. 25.

I DARESAY you all know how frequently Paul in his letters takes his illustrations from the competitors in the Greek games. Never, probably till the England of our own day, has there been any land or any time that paid more attention to athletics than did ancient Greece. To-day we see thousands present at a great match, at Lord's or the Oval, or at some international football contest at the Crystal Palace, or on one of the great northern grounds. And so the thousands of Greece used to gather at Olympia or at Corinth to witness the wonderful athletic competitions in which all Greece was interested. At the annual inter-university boat race we know how

great is the excitement, and how keen the feeling of rivalry, but that is not quite a national event. On one occasion I happened to be present in America when the international yacht race was being decided, and there one saw in the great cities the tremendous enthusiasm of a people who seemed to feel as if their country's destiny, certainly their honour and prestige, hung in the balance.

To witness the excitement enabled one to realise a little how these famous contests affected the society of the old world. The victors were national heroes, and not only were feasted and applauded, but the greatest poets were ready to expend their genius in writing odes to commemorate their triumphs; and these are among the immortal poems of the world. The reward, in the case of the Greek games, was not of much intrinsic value—a crown of laurel leaves; this was the "corruptible crown" of which the apostle speaks, for it soon withered, and its beauty did not last. Sometimes a leaf of the palm tree became the symbol of victory, hence its use in the motto that

forms our present text. But much effort was required to win the laurels or the palm. Much fatigue and discomfort had to be endured. The racecourse was not a soft velvety lawn nor yet the kind of track modern athletes are accustomed to, but a hot dusty road, where the runners suffered from the inconvenience of the flying sand that filled the air. It might seem a minor inconvenience, after all that they had formerly borne, but it was very real; just as our soldiers felt in South Africa. I read one of their letters the other day, in which he spoke of the dust and sand and intolerable heat as constituting the greatest hardships of the war. Other dangers they expected, and were therefore prepared to reckon with, but this, though in itself less severe and terrible than shells and bullets, wore out the nerves and tried the moral nature quite as severely. So it is that a price has to be paid for success in every enterprise: the discipline may be different, the difficulties to be encountered diverse, but difficulties must be surmounted, discipline must be undergone. Many have attempted

to climb the highest mountains. A hundred years ago it was a great feat to climb Mont Blanc, now ladies ascend it every season. Afterwards the great peaks of the Caucasus were mastered. Next the lofty ranges of the Andes attracted attention, and the northern heights of Ecuador were scaled. Only recently the fascinating narrative of Mr. FitzGerald was published, a narrative of his victories over the giant summits of the southern ranges, and now only the highest points of the Himalayas remain unconquered. To read the story of the ascent of Aconcagua, the highest of the Andes, is an inspiring story, and teaches several lessons. All through it is a narrative of difficulties, surmounted by patience, endurance, and skill.

First came the trying heat of the valleys, the awful dust, the dangerous fords, the lazy guides, the stampeding mules, then the hardships of the actual climbing, slopes of rolling stones, the grind over soft snow, the scaling of difficult rocks. Later came new troubles. The great height, and increasing rarity of the atmosphere, rendered the

climbers weak, sick, and unable to resist the piercing cold. They had to camp at that great height, about nineteen thousand feet, and could not sleep for cold and the difficulty of breathing, huddled as they were in a tiny tent.

Then followed the attempt to reach the summit, staggering, faint, dizzy, they plodded on, and at last the goal was in view. With only one thousand feet above him the leader of the expedition had to give up the attempt. All that his brain had planned, his wealth rendered possible, his unflagging zeal and courage thus far accomplished, was for him rendered unattainable.

He sees the guide who could never have come here without his help do what he has dared and suffered so much to attempt; but the goal is not to be his. The dust has been his, but the palm is withheld. That is a parable of what often happens in the races that men run for the prizes of earth. They are withheld just as their hand is stretched out to grasp them—striving, weariness, zeal, sacrifice, all end

in disappointment, and some one else reaps the renown. But there is one race in which that cannot happen. It is true here as elsewhere, that there is no palm without the dust, no crown without the cross, but if the runner is faithful, enduring the dust, he will be sure to win the palm. This struck Paul as another great contrast between the earthly race and the heavenly. He pointed out that while in the contests of the games only one runner could win the laurel, in the other every competitor received a wreath—each brow became the brow of a conqueror. That makes a great difference. One can endure very much, and wait very long, when one is certain that hope cannot be disappointed. It was a great saying of a brave and noble Christian man of business in our own day, that "Christ saves up to the goal." If we start on the Christian race we need have no fear that we shall not succeed, that we shall never reach the goal, that we shall be baulked of our prize. Obey the rules, keep the course, do not take your eyes off the point to be reached, and you are assured

of victory and reward. He who has set us the race—by whose strength we run, and for whose sake we endure, has promised this, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." Perhaps we cannot see for the dust now. You have read *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. You remember how East, Tadpole, and Tom ran at Bigside hare and hounds. How three miserable little fellows, unable to finish the run, wet, hungry, late, dragged down the muddy lane, reaching school only to be sent to the dreaded doctor's study. How kind he was to them, how fine a tea they had, and then afterwards they voted the sport the best known, and were ready for any number of runs, they who an hour or two before vowed they would never face such an ordeal again. Virgil makes his hero Æneas say to his companions, after some trying experiences, "One day it will afford you great joy to remember these miseries." Yes, boys and girls, don't let us be faint-hearted in our running. Don't let us weary of the heat and the dust. Temptation may be strong, powers of endurance may

be feeble, yielding may seem easier than resistance, but one day all will be changed. The crowned victor laughs at the struggles through which he has passed. Jesus Christ holds out the palm, yea, is Himself the Goal as well as Captain of the runners—who will fail to follow?—who will fear to strive?

REALITY

"Esse quam videri."

"Not in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and truth."—1 JOHN iii. 18.

I SUPPOSE you have all read *Alice in Wonderland*, and you may remember how Alice and the duchess had a strange conversation about a flamingo, and how the duchess put confusing and difficult questions to Alice. The latter, you remember, tried to discover what mustard really was, and at last hit upon its true nature, saying: "Oh, I know, it is a vegetable; it does not look like one, but it is." "I quite agree with you" said the duchess; "the moral of that is, 'Be what you would seem to be,' or, if you would like it put more simply—never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not other-

wise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise." I am sure none of us are surprised that Alice replied very politely: "I think I should understand that better if I had had it written down, but I am afraid I can't quite follow it as you say it." To which the duchess answered, saying: "That is nothing to what I could say if I chose." And I am pretty certain we all agree with Alice when she immediately replied: "Pray, don't trouble yourself to say it any longer than that."

Now, I do not wish to say the beautiful words of this motto "any longer" than need be, and perhaps they are so simple themselves that they need no explanation. "To be rather than seem to be" is surely clear enough, and many families must have thought the motto an extremely fine one, for it appears as the chosen legend of more families than almost any other, and when we add to it some that are very like it, such as the motto, "Be what you seem to be," and "To be and to seem to be," we can see how this love of genuineness and the desire to impress it upon themselves is

one that many men possess. It is said that the Latin words were first employed in praise of Cato, who was always regarded as one of the most genuine and honest of all the Roman statesmen, and surely there could be no finer tribute paid to any man than the testimony that he was always better than his word, and nobler than his actions! The words, however, run counter to much of the opinion and teaching of the world round about us. How often we hear people speak about "keeping up appearances," as if the outward show was all that mattered, and the inward reality did not count for much. Perhaps there has been no reformation more important in the latter half of the nineteenth century than the great love of genuineness, which has spread into every department of life. We can see it even in the things round about us in our homes. Where once upon a time it was customary to build houses faced with plaster and then marked to imitate stone, we find the majority are now built of honest brick. Where, again, it used to be the practice to stain doors to imitate oak, walnut, or some

other kind of wood, they are now painted in plain colour. It has become fashionable, in fact, to have things real and not imitation. It is better "form" to have a common thing good than an ambitious attempt to imitate an expensive thing in cheaper material, and this principle goes very deep and very far. Mr. Ruskin, who taught our generation so many great and noble lessons, never taught a more valuable one than when, in his chapter on the "Lamp of Truth," he said so many true and unforgettable words about the value of reality in all the materials that are employed in art, and the uses to which they are put. "Speaking truth," he says, "is like writing fair, and comes only by practice,—it is less a matter of will than of habit," and I doubt if any action can be trivial which determines the practice and formation of such a habit. I hope that one day every one of you will read not only that great essay, but the whole book of which it is a part, and try to grasp for yourselves the great lessons it imparts. It is far more important that we should possess this love of truthfulness in the inner things

rather than the outward, for truthfulness is part of the fabric of our life. You know that if there is a stain in the material it is possible to have it removed, but if there is some defect in the thread of which a fabric is composed nothing can remove the evil. I have seen marks in the walls of a house that have stained the most valuable papers that had been hung upon them, and when the papers were all taken off the stains were found in the plaster, and then it was discovered that the whole source of the mischief was the insertion of a brick into the wall that had been formerly used in a chimney, and was saturated with soot. Nothing could remove the stains but taking out the brick that was the source of all the mischief.

So there must be nothing left in the innermost recesses of our life of untruthfulness, if we are to speak and act truly. One of the great obstacles to the spread of Christ's religion is, that so many people that claim to belong to Him do not act as He acted. Men insist upon looking at His followers rather than at Himself, and though

we can quite understand why they do it, it is very necessary that the greatest care should be taken by those who profess to follow Him, to shew forth sincerely whose they are and whom they serve. It is far better not to profess faith in Christ than to call ourselves Christians and act so that He would be ashamed of us.

I remember once seeing on an old house in Shetland, the memorable little motto, consisting of three Latin words—"Tace aut fac," which mean—"Keep silence or act." They remind us that it is worse than useless to make professions if we do not purpose to carry them out. There is a story told about Benvenuto Cellini, that on one occasion he, in company with some other artists, was discussing some work of art which had been ordered by the king. They all spoke at great length of what should be done, and of how it should be carried out, and discoursed learnedly of the splendour of the work. Meanwhile Cellini listened and said nothing; and when they had finished he exclaimed, "You have spoken, gentlemen; I will perform!" It

would have been a vain and foolish boast had he not been conscious of his ability and strength, but it was a noble utterance from a man who knew that, though he had made no boast, by dint of skill, patience, and endeavour he would be able to produce so excellent a work of art that it should be sufficiently eloquent in itself to require no description in order to win admiration. There is only one danger attached to the following of this motto. People sometimes think that making the claim to be what they seem serves as an excuse and apology for rudeness. They pride themselves on what they call their honesty, and do not seem to remember that we should first of all determine to be good, true, and lovely in character, and then shew forth this spirit to those round about us. It is a mistake to think that genuineness excuses evil conduct: a man may not deny that he is a thief, but that does not make stealing honest, he would be a worse man if he added to his theft by hypocrisy, if he praised honesty and pretended to practise it; but the mere fact of confessing himself dishonest does not

exonerate him or excuse his sin. Thus we must be sure that we have something worth shewing to others before we go the further step of being proud to disclose it.

Let us be what we seem, certainly, but let that disclosure reveal a true and good heart. "In deed and in truth" are the words of John that I have chosen to stand alongside this motto, and you remember of what it is he is speaking, it is about love: the love to our fellow-men, and the love to God. This is to be without dissimulation, we are to show it clearly because we feel it strongly. Let us first love God with all our heart, and then we shall love our neighbour, and let him know that we love him.

FAITHFUL AND FREE

"Libera deinde fidelis."

"With freedom did Christ set us free, stand fast therefore."—GAL. v. 1.

These Latin words form the motto of a little town that lies in the midst of the lovely Surrey hills, and it is a town in whose history there is a fine illustration of its own motto. In the dark days for religion in England that followed the Restoration of 1662, a large number of foreign refugees and other simple-minded men and women were gathered in this town as weavers, and they maintained two meeting-houses with large congregations, where they met to worship God after the dictates of their own conscience, and without fear of the persecution of the State. Now, I remember that I am speaking to-day to the boys and girls of the Free Churches, and

I wish you to think for a little while about how great a liberty has been won for us by the efforts and sufferings of our forefathers, and of how it behoves us to be loyal to those principles for which they suffered so patiently and strove so well.

And *first*, I wish you to think how we have been liberated in the matter of worship. You have all heard of the time when it meant death for any man to possess or even to read the Bible in his own tongue. You know how brave men like Wycliffe, Tyndale, and Coverdale suffered persecution and imprisonment, and even death, in their determination to give the Word of God to the people in a form in which they could understand it. But it was not only for the liberty to read God's book that people had to strive, but also in order to be permitted to worship in that simple form in which they felt they could best strengthen and keep alive their faith. Everything, save the rigid forms of the Church, were counted heretical and illegal, and those who sought any other form of worship were hunted like wild beasts. They were shut

up in horrible prisons, tortured and put to death in the most cruel way. In one prison of London alone, called the "Fleet," on the site of which the Memorial Hall in Farringdon Street now stands, hundreds of men, women, and children were confined for long periods, and many of them died. You know the name of one famous prisoner, John Bunyan, and the great book that came from his prison cell. Whatever other reasons there were for the Civil War, there can be no doubt that one of its great incentives was the desire for liberty of worship. It is almost impossible for us to realise to-day that the people of two hundred and fifty years ago should have had to meet in secret assemblies for fear of the king's soldiers, and resort to all kinds of stratagems to escape discovery and suffering. When better times came there were other forms of liberty yet to be won. For one thing, there were none of the beautiful hymns, in which you children now delight, used in service at all, and it needed courageous men to defend the right of the people, to have hymns written for them,

and to be permitted to sing them in worship. It was Isaac Watts who first created the general practice of hymn singing in our services, and he was the head of the long company of hymn-writers who have written such beautiful verses to brighten children's worship.

It is not so very much more than one hundred years ago that the first Sunday school was started in our land. You have heard the story of how Robert Raikes gathered together a few of the children in the city of Gloucester, because he was so sad at seeing them waste the Sunday in games and worse employments. And less than one hundred years ago she who started the Sunday school in this place was warned by the magistrates, that if she carried out her intention they would not be answerable for the consequences. We should therefore see to it that we are loyal to all the privileges that have been won for us. It will not be by refusing to follow anything new, nor by sticking to the old ways and the old forms, that we shall shew ourselves most loyal, but by living in the same spirit of

freedom and open-mindedness that characterised our fathers, and by not turning aside from the paths they marked out. Let our own Church be always very dear to us, and no light consideration move us aside from the fellowship of the Christian community in which we have been brought up. Least of all, let any consideration of worldly advancement, social prestige, or the desire to escape difficulties move us from our allegiance.

Secondly, we have been liberated in thought. This may not be quite such an easy thing for boys and girls to understand, and I do not wish to say very much to you about it, but inasmuch as some of you are growing into manhood and womanhood, and hear the questions of creeds and confessions discussed around you, I wish you to remember that the present freedom from all such bondage has been wrought out at great and heavy cost by your forefathers. It was the great men of the Puritan days —thinkers like Milton, Owen, John Howe, Richard Baxter, and the pupils of Cartwright, men of an older day—who handed

on the principles that men of the type of Dale and Baldwin Brown have passed on to our generation. Never, perhaps, was there a time when spiritual religion was more free from the bondage of creed-subscription, and greater liberty was granted to thought, while greater loyalty was paid to truth, than in the days in which we live. How, then, are we to be most loyal to those who won this freedom for us? Surely, it is by seeing that every one has the same liberty of conscience that we claim as our own right; and while we know that many must differ from us, by being very careful that we do not persecute them for their differences, nor call them hard names, or pass uncharitable judgments upon them, because they do not think as we do. To be true to truth is the first of all our duties, and the one that will make us most useful and faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. If anything in this is a little hard for you to understand, there will come a day when you will be glad to follow the lines I have marked out for you, and you will discover that they lead you into the fairest and most lovely heritage.

Thirdly, we have been liberated in learning.

One of the finest stories that I know in all history is that of the foundation of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. It was founded in the days of Queen Elizabeth by Sir Walter Mildmay, a man who was very dissatisfied at the Romanish tendencies of many of the other colleges. It is said that the queen met him one day and greeted him thus: "Sir Walter, I hear that you have erected a Puritan foundation." "No, madam," was the reply, "far be it from me to establish anything contrary to your established laws; but I have set an acorn which, when it becomes an oak, God alone knows what will be the fruit thereof." The little college known as the "pure house of Emmanuel" became a scandal to the high churchmen of a later day, so simple were its services, so much in conformity to New Testament practice were its methods. Into this community there came as a young undergraduate a lad called John Harvard. When his college days were over he emigrated, in company with many of his fellow-religionists, to that new and free country

beyond the sea. Here on the American continent was founded a new Cambridge, and the heroic band of men and women, surrounded by cruel enemies, threatened by pestilence and famine, and with very little property of any kind, came to a most courageous resolution. They determined that they would found a college of learning, and the following were the terms in which they agreed upon that momentous step. "After," they say, "God had carried us safe to New England, and we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government, one of the next things we longed for, and looked after, was to advance learning, and perpetuate it to posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to others when our present ministers shall lie in the dust."

The first president of the new college was John Harvard, and from that little but brave community has grown one of the great universities, not only of the United States, but of the world; and just outside its gates every passer-by may to-day read

the noble words of its foundation. There also is to be read the motto that controlled those who founded it, and which has become the watchword of a great Christian society of recent years, a society that many of you love, "Pro Christo et Ecclesia," "For Christ and the Church." Verily, Sir Walter's acorn has grown into a very great oak; and, as some of us have stood by that tablet in Cambridge, Mass., we have called to mind the lines which bid us

> "Call it holy ground,
> The soil where first they trod;
> They left unstained what there they found,—
> Freedom to worship God."

Or, as one of their own poets has put it—

> "Laws, freedom, truth, and faith in God
> Came with those exiles o'er the waves."

But within our own land there was a long fight for the free use of the old universities by all classes of religious people. It was not until well into the nineteenth century that the universities of Oxford and Cambridge were open to others than members of the Church of England. The theological learning of our Nonconformist

forefathers had to be obtained in the academies founded by men like Doddridge, institutions which had a most heroic history. But now the liberty has been obtained, and there are Nonconformist colleges in both the university towns, and members of all the Free Churches have distinguished themselves in their schools. Now it behoves us to be loyal to those grand traditions, to support the liberties that have been won for us, and to seek further freedom in the years that are to come. I bid you be lovers of equality and liberty in all matters of education, and when the time comes that you must take your place in the battles that have to be fought, see to it that you are true to the principles of those who went before us.

And, *last of all*, we have been liberated in service. The century that has just passed was the great century of religious and social missionary movements. Almost all the great missionary societies began their work during that century. The settlements in the poorer districts of our great cities were the outcome of the self-sacrificing devotion

of cultured Christian men and women, who wished to help and uplift their less fortunate brothers and sisters. How great and numerous the names of the famous pioneers of missionary labour in all parts of the world, the stories of whose lives I hope you will all learn to love. It has been ours also to advance our great empire, for there are no more honoured names amongst our colonists than those of McKenzie of South Africa and Chalmers of New Guinea, and grand it is to think that those who first represented civilisation to heathen peoples should also have been the heralds of the Cross. In the life of the nation, political and social, many victories have been won by our Free Church leaders, but these perhaps are scarcely likely to interest you yet. I wish, however, to quote to you words spoken by one of the greatest living politicians—Lord Rosebery—in his noble address on Oliver Cromwell. "What," he asked, "would be the type of a Cromwell for the nineteenth century?" and this was his reply: "He would be strenuous, he would be sincere, he would not compromise with principles, his faith would be in God

and in freedom, and in the influence of Great Britain as promoting and asserting both." Let us see to it that we live in the light of such an ideal as that, and when we are asked to take our place in the life of the town, the village, or the city, do so bravely in all movements that make for purity, temperance, liberty, and righteousness. The secret of it all is that each of us must be loyal and not hand over our duties to somebody else. I remember once reading a little poem that puts this truth so well that I shall repeat it to you—

"Who is Somebody Else? I should like to know,—
Does he live at the North or South!
Or is it a lady fair to see,
Whose name is in every one's mouth?
For Meg says, "Somebody Else will sing,"
Or, "Somebody Else will play,"
And Jack says, 'Please let Somebody Else
Do some of the errands to-day.'

If there's any hard or unpleasant task,
Or difficult thing to do,
'Tis always offered to Somebody Else—
Now, isn't that very true?
But if some fruit, or a pleasant trip,
Is offered to Dick or Jess,
We hear not a word of Somebody Else,
Why, I will leave you to guess.

The words of cheer for a stranger lad,
This Somebody Else will speak;
And the poor and helpless who need a friend,
Good Somebody Else must seek.
The cup of cold water in Jesus' name,
Oh! Somebody Else will offer,
And words of love for a broken heart,
Brave Somebody Else will proffer.

There are battles in life we only can fight,
And victories, too, to win,
And Somebody Else cannot take our place
When we shall have entered in.
But if Somebody Else has done his work,
While we for our ease have striven,
'Twill only be fair if the blessed reward
To Somebody Else is given."

We should not only be loyal, but we should love to be loyal. It is said that in the days of the Civil War there was a gentleman on the Royalist side who held for the king a manor house not far from Winchester, and that he wrote with a diamond upon his windows the motto, "Aimez loyauté," "Love loyalty," and that this was ever afterwards the name of his house. These words should be written on the heart of each of us, for the highest form of our liberation is, that we have been set free for holiness, for purity of life, and

goodness of character. This is what Jesus came to give us, and to Him we should be ever loyal. I have read a touching story of how, when Queen Victoria set free the slaves in Western Africa, there was a young slave girl that the great white queen had made free. All her life thereafter she cherished but one wish—to see her who had wrought her freedom. She began to save her little earnings until one day, when she was quite an old woman, she had saved enough to take her that long journey across the sea. She came to England, and the good queen heard her story, sent for her to Windsor, spoke to her kindly, let her kiss her hand, and gave her one of her own portraits as a keepsake.

Do you think the old negress would ever forget that interview?—would she not speak of it with rapture all her days, and nothing seem possible but the most devoted and loyal love? How much more do we owe to the great King, and how loyal should be our service!

[The words of this motto have a special

interest to the young people of the Congregational churches, as it has been chosen as the motto of the Young People's Union, the organisation which links together all the young people's societies of the denomination in a common bond. It forms a training-ground for loyalty and service, and should win the support of all the youth of the churches.]

THE WONDERFUL GUIDE

"Optima revelatio stella."

"We saw His star."—MATT. ii. 2.

THIS motto is one of those about which I told you in my first talk. It contains a kind of punning reference to the name of the family that bears it, and also alludes to their crest, which in this case is a star. The family is that of Reveley, which, you see, corresponds in sound to part of the middle word of the three. The text that I have given you points, I suppose, to the source from which the motto itself is derived. It occurs in one of the most beautiful of the many lovely and suggestive stories that cluster round the cradle of Jesus. There are no more picturesque figures in the imagination of the early Church than those of the three wise men who came from the far East. They were typical of how one

day not only all nations, but all the wisdom of this world, was to bow at the feet of Jesus. They came from a long distance, no one knew quite whence, and they had followed a strange and wonderful guide, no revealing voice, but a brilliant steady star. Are there stars for us to follow? We cannot look for them to appear suddenly in the heavens as the wise men saw theirs, but if this motto means anything, it implies that there are such stars, which may be guides to our feet. One noticeable point about the star the wise men followed was, that it led them to Jesus. The stars that may be the guides of our life are what men call "ideals." Now, perhaps that word is not quite an easy one for you to understand, but it really means pure, high, and noble aims. Every boy and girl builds what we call "castles in the air." They form fancies about their future life—one is going to be an artist, another a poet, another a nurse, another a doctor, another a minister, another a soldier: they discuss all these with the greatest gravity, and regard them as of the highest importance. Sometimes their ideals

are very strange. They are like the little boy, perhaps, in Stevenson's poem of the "Lamplighter," who thought that the finest occupation in the world—

> "Now Tom would be a lawyer, and Maria go to sea;
> And my papa's a banker, and as rich as he can be,
> But I, when I am stronger, and can choose what I'm to do,
> O Leerie,[1] I'll go round at nights, and light the lamps with you."

But in spite of all their quaintness these children's fancies are of the greatest value, they often mould our life much more deeply than older people think. We cherish them within our hearts, and we do not let them go, though if people make fun of them we may cease to speak about them. They remain our own secrets, and are all the more precious because of their secrecy. Many times they are God's messengers to us, to show what He wants us to be and to do; they point out the way for us whereby God will lead us to render Him the best service we can in the coming years. Men think they explain them when they call them by

[1] "Leerie-leerie-licht-the-lamps" was the name given by the children in Scotland to the lamplighter.

such long names as "indications of hereditary talent," "artistic temperament," and so forth, but it is much better for us to think of them as God's stars, and never to lose sight of the true and noble ones, for they will bring us to the place we desire.

You remember that many people were told about that birth at Bethlehem, but no two of them in the same way. I can imagine the meeting taking place, outside the walls of the little town, between the wise men on their return and a group of humble peasants. "What!" say the peasants, "where have you been?" "We have been to visit a little child in the courtyard of an inn," say the strangers. "What!" asked the shepherds, "did you also hear a choir of angels singing in the midnight sky?" "No music reached us," say the wise men; "'twas a star that led us here." "A star!" say the shepherds amazed,—"why, there are thousands of stars in the sky every night; how could a star bring you here?" And so they would talk, neither company understanding the other, but both certain of this—

that they had been led to the cradle of the same child.

The old man Simeon, in the temple, had his revelation in quite a different way, as did Anna and Elisabeth. As each could best understand it, God sent them the message. To one an angel, to another a star, to another nothing but a clearer light upon the written page of prophecy, but along the lines of their own highest life and fullest knowledge God taught these faithful hearts.

A friend of mine was early one morning walking along a path in an Indian forest. Suddenly he became aware, in front of him, of a Brahmin priest walking along the same path. He knew it would not be courteous to pass him. The priest was engaged in chanting verses from his sacred writings. My friend knew the words, and presently joined in the responses. Then the priest began to extemporise, as was the manner of his people, and in this strange kind of chant a conversation was carried on. The missionary began to tell him of a great friend of his own, some one who was so wise and good

and helpful and great that He always was able and ready to aid those who loved Him. "You must show me Him, you must bring me to Him," cried the Brahmin. "I cannot show you Him," was the answer, "but if you speak to Him with your own heart He will hear you and will show you Himself." "I understand," said the priest; "that is what my sacred books tell me,—henceforth I will meditate only upon Jesus, and my heart will commune with Him." Can you doubt that along the lines of his own thought the Lord had really come to this faithful seeker? So I say to you, follow those things which are best and purest, so far as you know and understand them. Let your noblest impulses guide you, your most loving thoughts prompt you, and be true always to the best that is within you, and you will find Jesus.

Another thing about the journey of these wise men is, that when once they saw the star they followed it faithfully. Had they turned aside at the first difficulty, or when beset by discouragements and dangers, they had never found their way to Bethlehem; so, when we set out on this quest of the best

and highest that life holds, we must not permit ourselves to turn aside for any lower consideration. We shall, almost certainly, be often laughed at, and there will be many ready to dissuade us from the line of conduct we have chosen, but if we are only brave enough to persevere we shall find our endeavour crowned with the highest and truest success.

A very wise and aged leader of men said not long ago, that as he stood near the end of his life and looked back upon it, he discovered that it was never his ideals that had led him wrong, but that his failures were due to his having forgotten them, and not having had faith enough to ask from his friends the same amount of self-sacrifice and devotion that he had been willing to give to them himself. "There can," he said, "be no discouragement to the truly surrendered soul." I am not sure that you will quite understand that saying, but the lines of Tennyson may make it clearer—

> "Our wills are ours, we know not how,—
> Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

All the good that comes from our being

able to choose between different courses is, that we may choose what God wants us to do.

The last thought that I wish to impress upon you is—that these men saw a star only, yet it was enough for them. There are some words in the story that I always delight to read: "when they saw the star," it says, "they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." Such gladness filled their hearts because the star they had been following at last stood still over the place where the child lay. For us there is not only the star and the child that they saw: but we know the child grew up to be the boy Jesus at Nazareth, to be the Man of healing and helping in Galilee and in Judea, to be the Man of Sorrows who suffered on the cross, and to be the Man at God's right hand who, Victor over sin and death, remembers and prays for us.

Will it be that these wise men, who saw comparatively so little, shall have made better use of the star than we do of the Christ to whom it pointed? Let our hearts, dear children, go out to the loving Lord, and

may He become the star of our life, the Lord of our hearts!

"When marshalled on the nightly plain
The glittering host bestud the sky,
One star alone, of all the train,
Can fix the sinner's wandering eye.

Hark! Hark! to God the chorus breaks,
From every host, from every gem;
But one alone the Saviour speaks—
It is the Star of Bethlehem.

It was my guide, my light, my all;
It bade my dark forebodings cease;
And through the storm and danger's thrall
It led me to the port of peace.

Now safely moored—my perils o'er,
I'll sing, first in night's diadem,
For ever and for evermore,
The Star—the Star of Bethlehem."

"THE BEST IS YET TO BE"

"αἰεν ἀριστευειν."

"So run, that ye may attain."—1 Cor. ix. 24.

These Greek words, which mean, "Ever to be the best," form the striking legend in the hall of one of the Scottish universities. They are read many times by the successive generations of students who pass through its classes, and form a stimulating and inspiring motto for their life.

It is said that in one instance there came a boy to the university from a village home, and that as he read the words they made such an impression upon him that he determined to live in their spirit, and to write their lesson large upon the story of his life. Though he had few advantages at the start of his race, had indeed to battle against many and severe odds, he so guided his course and used his talents to such advan-

tage that he succeeded in becoming Lord Chancellor of England! They are brave words, and inspire the spirit of heroism in every heart that hears them. They assume that we have all a race to run, that we have all a goal to reach, while they tell us the spirit in which the contest is to be undertaken, and suggest the mood in which alone victory will crown our efforts. None of us should be content to fall at any moment below the best we can be. Our best may not, indeed, will not be somebody else's best. The words do not mean that we must always be first. It is impossible for everybody to be first. There can only be one head of a class, only one Senior Wrangler in a year. It is possible, however, for everybody to reach the best for himself or herself.

That great artist, poet, and craftsman—William Morris—was once asked which one of his books had interested him most. "The one upon which I was at the moment engaged," was the wise and wonderful reply.

Now, this is the secret, boys and girls, of successful lives. We have to do the work we happen to be at the moment en-

gaged upon with the very best output of our power. To live thus is to have got what one of my friends calls the "Eversley spirit." By this he means the brave purpose that possessed Charles Kingsley when he faced his difficult task on being called to the living at Eversley. He found it a little neglected Hampshire village, with an uncared-for church, and the people no better looked after than the building. Against much opposition, and in face of grave misunderstanding, he set himself determinedly to the work of reform. If you will read the story of his life—one of the best and most helpful books that has ever been written — you will discover how he succeeded. He has himself put the secret into the words of his well-known poem—

> "Do the work that's nearest,
> Though it's dull at whiles,
> Helping when you meet them—
> Lame dogs over stiles."

The words not only speak to us of action, but they point out the way in which we are to act, so holding up the guiding star that we may feel it bidding us believe that

the best is never behind, but always in front of us. They also brace us that we may put forth our strongest effort to accomplish the best; they are like a tonic to a man in sickness, like the breezes of the mountain-summit to the dweller in the valleys. Nobody but a brave man will attempt to obey them, but they will make any one brave who determines to live in their light. They are also eminently Christian words. I have given you a saying of Paul's alongside them. Paul also has the race in mind, but he remembers that in ordinary races not every competitor can win a prize. There is only one race in which that is possible — the race which Christ bids us run. Paul tells us that there is a condition we must needs fulfil if we would win the prize even there. Competitors may enter for the contest and drop out. We may begin to race well, but something may hinder us, and we stop short. "Take heed how you run" is Paul's counsel. "So run," he says, "that ye may attain." This, therefore, is the way in which I wish us all to run the heavenly race,

determining never to falter till the prize Christ holds out is within our grasp. It means a strenuous and not an easy life, and yet there is a wonderful provision whereby in some strange way, though the hardness and the duty remain, as in the path of virtue described by one of the old Greek poets, "when the ascent seems at its hardest the way is somehow easy too." That is the wonder of Christ's ways. He calls us to Himself, and says, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." These words of Jesus teach us how we may avoid the greatest danger that attaches to following out the counsel of our motto. If we seek "ever to be the best," there is a danger perhaps that we shall become proud of our own performances. There is nothing more difficult than to succeed and at the same time to keep humble. Jesus gives us the secret when He tells us that He is meek and lowly of heart, and that we are to become like Him. Let us never forget that when we have done our best we have not therefore done *the* best,—this

is always beyond us, and it is this something further to which Jesus bids us advance—

> "Only rest not, once having striven,
> But aye thy conquering cause maintain."

There is another motto of a similar nature to this one, which was chosen by Queen Margaret of Navarre, and has been that of many noble houses. The words of the motto are, "Non inferiora secutus," that is, "Not having followed meaner things." Margaret's emblem, to which the motto was attached, was a sunflower, the idea being, that just as that flower followed the sun in its course, and would turn itself to no lesser light, so the heart that took this motto for its own would refuse to follow any lower leader than the Lord Himself. We are told that Tennyson once said to a friend, as he was walking with him in his flower-garden, and stopped to look at one of the little blossoms upturned to the sky, "What the sun is to that flower, Jesus Christ is to my soul." It is this beauty of attraction, this compelling love, this answering loyalty, this faithful following of our Lord that will alone enable us to be ever the best.

I finish what I have to say to you this morning by repeating some verses which were written by one of the graduates of the university, on whose walls the motto stands. They are founded upon it, and will help to remind you of the lesson it teaches—

"'*Ever to be the best.*' To lead
In whatsoever things are true;
Nor stand among the halting crew,
The faint of heart, the feeble-kneed
Who tarry for a certain sign
To make them follow with the rest;—
Oh, let not their reproach be thine!
But ever be the best.

For want of this aspiring soul,
Great deeds on earth remain undone,
But sharpened by the sight of one,
Many shall press toward the goal.
Thou running foremost of the throng,
The fire of striving in the breast,
Shalt win, although the race be long—
And ever be the best.

And wilt thou question of the prize?
'Tis not of silver or of gold,
Nor in applauses manifold,
But hidden in the heart it lies.
To know that but for thee not one
Had run the race or sought the quest,
To know that thou hast ever done,
And ever been the best."

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